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ABSTRACT

This monograph presents papers and dialogue group highlights from a symposium on the growing challenge of school aggression and violence, strategies to combat this aggression and violence, and ways to make schools safe again. An introductory paper by Cynthia L. Warger is titled "Responding to School Violence within an Educational Framework." Presentations by keynote speakers include: (1) "Aggression and Violence in the Schools: What Do We Know About It?" (Eleanor Guetzloe); (2) "School-Based Programs for the Prevention and Treatment of Aggression and Violence: Why Aren't They More Effective?" (Richard Van Acker); and (3) "Programs That Work in Reducing Aggression and Violence: Emerging Best Practices in Homes, Schools, and Communities" (Mary Lynn Cantrell and Robert P. Cantrell). Papers summarizing dialogue groups include: "School Aggression and Violence: Reactions from Practitioners in the Field" (Maureen A. Conroy and Dana Harader); "An Education Imperiled: The Challenge of Aggressive and Violent Behavior in the Schools" (Robert A. Gable and Nancy L. Arllen); "Voices on Violence: Concern and First Consensus" (Michael M. Gerber and Ann Fitzsimons); "Strategies To Reduce School Aggression and Violence" (Thomas R. Kelchner); "Teacher-Mediated Interventions for Reducing Classroom Aggression" (Robert B. Rutherford, Jr.); and "Creating Community: A Promising Concept for Preventing and Eliminating Aggressive and Violent Behaviors" (Jo M. Hendrickson and others). (Individual papers contain references.) (DB)

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Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

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Highlights from the Working Forum on Children and Youth Who Have Aggressive and Violent Behaviors

Sponsored by
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders

Tampa, Florida **February 2–3, 1995**

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Perspectives on School Aggression and Violence

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Sponsored by
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders
Tampa, Florida **February 2–3, 1995**

Edited by

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About the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)

CCBD is an international professional organization committed to promoting and facilitating the education and general welfare of children/youth with behavioral and emotional disorders. CCBD, whose members include educators, parents, mental health personnel, and a variety of other professionals, actively pursues quality educational services and program alternatives for persons with behavioral disorders, advocates for the needs of such children and youth, emphasizes research and professional growth as vehicles for better understanding behavioral disorders, and provides professional support for persons who are involved with and serve children and youth with behavioral disorders.

In advocating for the professionals in the field of behavioral disorders, CCBD (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children) endorses the Standards for Professional Practice and Code of Ethics which was adopted by the Delegate Assembly of The Council for Exceptional Children in 1983.

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  - **Ensuring Appropriate Services to Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders - I***
  - **Ensuring Appropriate Services to Children and Youth with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders - II***

* The audiotapes feature the keynote speakers and the monographs highlight the speakers and the discussion groups for the two CCBD Working Forums on Inclusion held in St. Louis, MO, October 1, 1993 (Vol. I) and in Hartford, CT, March 25, 1994 (Vol. II).

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PREFACE

The Challenge Before Us All

"Violence in America has reached epidemic proportions. Today, all Americans are touched directly and indirectly by violent acts" (Center for the Study of Prevention of Violence, 1992). No longer can one pick up a newspaper or turn on the television without being confronted by another account of this tragic phenomenon played out in one place or another. It is especially difficult to accept the escalating violence in which school-aged children are both perpetrators and victims. Unfortunately, the burgeoning numbers of aggressive and violent acts reported by school authorities testify to the significant impact that aggression is having on the quality of public education. Indeed, school aggression and violence have become so severe that a growing number of professional and governmental entities have taken steps to study and address the problem. A few examples of the recent attention given to the topic of aggression include

- 1991-93 The American Psychological Association established a commission to study the problem culminating in an impressive report entitled "Violence and Youth: Psychology's Response."
- 1992 The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence, funded by the Carnegie Corporation, opened at the University of Colorado, Boulder.
- 1993 "Metropolitan Life Survey of American Teachers: Violence in America's Public Schools" was published.
- 1994 The National Association of School Psychologists devoted a full issue of *School Psychology Review* (23:2) to the topic of school violence.
- 1994 The Institute on Behavioral and Learning Differences of the University of North Texas held the Eagle Summit on Aggression and Violence, an invitation study group, in Irving, Texas.
- 1994 The Conference on Safe Schools, Safe Students, sponsored by the National Goals Panel and the National Alliance of Public Service Organizations, was held in Washington, DC, and Chicago, IL.
- 1995 *Phi Delta Kappan* published a Kappan Special Report entitled "Standing Up to Violence."

The Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD), a division of The Council for Exceptional Children, recognizes that many of the young people who are or have the potential to become involved in aggressive or violent acts have unique emotional and behavioral problems that warrant special attention. It is for this reason that CCBD sponsored the Forum on Working with Children and Youth Who Have Aggressive and Violent Behaviors held in Tampa, FL. In February 1995, professionals from several different fields (e.g., general and special education, law enforcement, mental health, and social work) came together to examine critically the issues associated with working with children and youth who have violent or aggressive behaviors and to propose solutions that might facilitate meeting the unique challenges posed by these students.

What follows is a series of papers developed by keynote speakers and facilitators designed to capture the highlights of the Forum. Specific topics addressed included (a) the growing challenge of school aggression and violence, (b) strategies to combat this aggression and violence, and (c) ways to make schools safe again. It is our sincere hope that you will find these papers informative and useful as you strive to develop and implement programs of prevention and intervention for students with challenging behaviors.

Lyndal M. Bullock
Robert A. Gable
Editors

Responding to School Violence Within an Educational Framework

Cynthia L. Warger
Warger, Eavy, and Associates

While attending the CCBD Forum on Violence and Aggression, of which the proceedings in this monograph are based, I overheard the following comment:

> *I don't know about you, but I didn't hear anything new. We've been doing most of these things for years.*

The sentiments expressed in this statement stuck with me for days. I went back through my notes and reread the materials. And, I must admit, there was not a lot that I too had not heard before. There were stories of youth out of control, complete with the behavioral indicators which all of us in the field of emotional/behavioral disorders know only too well. There were descriptions of strategies that had been proven successful, strategies that can be found in most emotional/behavioral disorders classrooms across the country. And, there were accounts of programs that work, that have in common many of the same elements found in exemplary programs for youth with emotional/behavioral disorders.

As I reflected on all of this, I held in abeyance the impulse to dismiss the conference as not really getting to the heart of the matter. Where were the definitive answers? The new and innovative approaches that would lead us all out of the frightening quagmire of violence and into the pastoral future where safe schools and safe neighborhoods are the norm? Instead, what I came to was a simple truth: Professionals in the field of emotional/behavioral disorders know a lot *already* about curbing violence and aggression in the nation's youth. We have demonstrated repeatedly that we can help children and youth develop nonviolent and nonaggressive strategies and approaches for dealing with difficult issues and people in their lives. The profession's many years conducting research and implementing successful practices have resulted in an extensive base of expertise that can, in fact, contribute to ending the senseless cycle of violence which increasingly touches us all.

From this perspective, what was new and exciting about the information presented both at the forum and in the following pages of this monograph is its apparent widespread application to solving problems of violence and aggression in the greater school community. There is a solid place to start in addressing what the nation has identified as one of the top problems today (Miller, 1994; Sautter, 1995), and many trained educational professionals are already engaged in finding solutions. When school personnel talk about violence and aggression, the discussion is rarely limited to those students who *qualify* for special education services, even though a strong argument has been made suggesting that youth who commit terrible crimes should, by the very nature of those actions, qualify. In fact, the reports of violence and aggression rarely (if at all) differentiate between those students receiving special education services and those who are not. However, regardless of labels, as the authors in this monograph attest, much is known about the treatment of students who display violent and aggressive behaviors in schools so as to ameliorate their behavior. And some of that information directly parallels what is known to be true about some students with emotional/behavioral disorders.

What Have We Learned About Addressing Violence and Aggression in Youth?

No one seems to know for sure why more violent actions are occurring today than several decades ago. But some things can be done to begin to fix the prob-

lem when it is defined from an educational perspective. First, although it is an almost universal human tendency to hold tight to a fairy-tale ending, it is better to realize and accept that there is no single cause for violence and aggression — which means that there is no single remedy or cure. A complex set of circumstances and variables comes into play whenever violent and aggressive behavior occurs. However, as Guetzloe (Chapter 2) describes, an extensive knowledge base already exists about the factors associated with the development of violent and aggressive responses in children and youth, including

- Predisposing factors (such as prenatal influences, neurophysiological disorders, and learned responses — to name a few).
- Early predictors that have been observed in young children who later display violent behaviors (such as being a victim of abuse or engaging in prior violent acts).
- The opportunity to behave aggressively, either in the case of certain conditions being present (such as when weapons are readily available or supervision is reduced or lacking) or in the case of triggering events in which the individual perceives he or she has been significantly "wronged" (such as when personal space has been invaded, personal property is at risk of loss, or insults or other aggressive actions are directed toward the individual).
- Family factors (such as violence in the home, inadequate childrearing practices).

In the school context, these factors might be exacerbated by inadequate school rules, procedures, and structures. Add the presence of gangs, drug trafficking, racial conflict, or weapons to the school campus, and the conditions may be ripe for expressions of violence and aggression.

There is nothing new about these factors. Indeed, the reader might find similar lists in textbooks and manuals for educating children and youth with behavioral disorders that have been around for several decades. In his now classic text, Kauffman (1977) described family, biophysical, and school factors related to violent and aggressive behaviors; Rhodes and Tracy (1974) provided similar lists in their synthesis of the knowledge base on child deviancy. Instead, what appears to be particularly significant in the context of the current discussion of violence and aggression, is that we are dealing with a number of behaviors and related factors for which the behavioral disorders profession has developed a strong research and practice expertise.

Understanding these factors enables educators to design better preventive and corrective approaches to eliminating and/or reducing the incidents of violence and aggression (Arllen, Gable, & Hendrickson, 1994). It is not surprising that many of the practices and program elements that are being offered — including those contained in this monograph — have a heritage in the behavioral disorder circuits. For example, if a child does not have adequate social skills for solving conflicts, then he or she needs to be taught specific social skills. In collaboration with social workers and mental health personnel, education professionals can offer parenting skills to high risk families. Early intervention provides a structure to remediate behaviors before they become serious. The addition of adult supervision in an area where there previously was none can curtail many of the illegal or rule-breaking activities associated with violent actions. All in all, basing interventions on known factors can serve as a cost-effective and efficient means to determine which approaches have the greatest potential for solving the problem.

From an educational perspective, professionals have applied their best thinking and experience to ameliorating the current expansion of violence and aggression in schools. Educational professionals are uniquely trained to alter and promote new skills, knowledge, and attitudes in this area (Miller, 1994). And, while there might not be available a laundry list of empirically tested strategies that specifically have been tested and are guaranteed to decrease violent incidents (see, for example, American Psychological Association, 1993; Larson, 1994; Lawton, 1994; Tolan & Guerra, 1994), the majority of educational professionals agree that a long-term treatment approach — with no "quick fixes" to use the Cantrells' words — is needed if we are to enact substantial change.

In building the capacity for schools to address the needs of violent and aggressive-prone youngsters, Cantrell and Cantrell (Chapter 4) discuss several actions that can be taken:

- Plan for crisis management and ensure a safe environment.
- Develop and review contingency management structures.
- Develop and review curriculum and activity needs.
- Develop a cognitive curriculum that focuses on violence reduction.
- Involve families in educational planning.
- Develop collaborative relationships with others in the community.
- Invest in continued learning opportunities for families, educational professionals, and the greater community.

Each of these actions reflects an underlying assumption that schools must become more child and family

centered. As has long been the norm in special education classrooms, the needs of the whole student — cognitive, affective, social, and physical — must be addressed if school institutions are to make progress in preparing youth to lead productive, well-adjusted, and happy lives. Rather than a hit-or-miss intervention being applied to solve an immediate problem, a more systemic approach to school restructuring is called for in the recommendations.

Even when districts opt for specialized approaches, these cannot realistically be extended into the fabric of the entire school without undertaking extensive planning and preparation, as well as ensuring commitment from all stakeholders. At a basic level, teachers and administrators overwhelmingly feel unprepared to address the issues related to students with violent and aggressive behaviors (Furlong, Morrison, & Dear, 1994; Metropolitan Life, 1993; National Association of State Boards of Education, 1994). Communities too are at a loss as to how best to proceed. So it is not surprising that when approaches are given the go-ahead, there are a number of reasons why they have not met with greater success.

Van Acker (Chapter 3) documents a number of reasons why particular interventions, when applied to reducing violence and aggression in schools, have not produced better results. Overall, he argues, most school-based intervention programs have failed to recognize the complexity of social interactions responsible for the development and support of aggression and violence, not to mention the social contexts within which the individual must function. In addition, intervention approaches have yielded disappointing results when educators fail to provide instruction known to promote the acquisition, mastery, and generalization of social problem-solving skills. Moreover, schools typically have moved forward into an approach without first ensuring that students actually have been taught the prerequisite prosocial strategies. Consequently, students ultimately fail in the approach not because they have chosen *not* to comply, but because they cannot perform the actions (for more discussion of how this concept relates directly to social skill development, see Rutherford, Chipman, DiGangi, & Anderson, 1992).

Educators have also attempted to apply interventions in a broad based arena, rather than to take into consideration such factors as the developmental stage of the particular child. Seldom are plans in place to accommodate the wide range of variance of student needs and characteristics, as well as those of the educators who serve them and their families. Nor are evaluation schemes designed to measure growth on an individual basis.

The American Psychological Association (1993) has noted that in the absence of research-based programs with documented effectiveness, educators might use the following characteristics as a rule of thumb when selecting potential programs:

- An understanding of developmental and sociocultural risk factors that lead to antisocial behavior
- The inclusion of theory-based intervention strategies with known effectiveness in changing behavior, tested program designs, and validated objective measurement techniques to assess outcomes.

Here again, schools can build upon the thoughtful planning already in place in special education programs for students with behavioral disorders (see, for example, Myles & Simpson, 1994). Best practices in designing quality programs for children and youth with emotional/behavioral disorders can be pooled with the knowledge of what is needed and works in the larger school context. Research-based strategies that work to change behavior (for a summary see Rutherford & Nelson, in press) can be applied in this larger context of teaching students with violent and aggressive behaviors more socially acceptable responses.

Moving Forward

Now that the treatment and prevention of violence and aggression has moved into the mainstream of public education, it has become everyone's responsibility. Just as professionals in the field of emotional/behavioral disorders are discovering the advantages of moving to a comprehensive system of wraparound services to educate students with behavioral disorders, the same concept is being discovered elsewhere in the school community: Prevention and treatment of aggression and violence in schools will require the concerted efforts of all stakeholders, including families, community agencies, mental health professionals, law enforcement agents, and the greater business community.

Probably one of the most gratifying outcomes of the CCBD Forum, which is captured in the group responses in this volume, is a specific focus on the need to form *and sustain* meaningful, collaborative partnerships. There is much to be learned from each other. The wheel does not necessarily need to be reinvented simply because policy makers and the press have newly discovered the "violence problem." Yes, there are children and youth whose actions and behaviors continue to perplex and challenge both educators and society as a whole. And yes, educators need to continue to forge new approaches and innovative techniques. But in doing so, we need to take advantage of the vast base of educational knowledge and rich sources of expertise that already exist in the educational community.

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Aggression and Violence in the Schools: What Do We Know About It?

Eleanor Guetzloe
University of South Florida, St. Petersburg

In Hopewell, Virginia, two brothers ages 10 and 11 doused a 3-year-old with gasoline and set him on fire. The victim survived although he suffered burns on over 85% of his body.

In Chicago, another pair of boys, ages 10 and 11, were charged with murder after pushing a 5-year-old out a 14th-story window in a public housing project. The victim and his brother had refused to steal for the older boys, both of whom already have criminal records that include weapons charges and thefts of more than $500.

A teenager acting out a video game stabbed a classmate 22 times in the belief that he would "advance to the next level" of Mortal Combat (a video game that has been critized for its violence). He believed that if he committed an act of horror, demons would take him away from this world and make him one of them.

A 17-year-old high school senior was gunned down in front of at least a dozen students on the campus of his suburban Los Angeles school. A 15-year-old fellow student has been charged with the murder.

The alleged gunman and the victim were members of rival "tagging crews," groups that formed years ago to mark property with graffiti. Over time the crews' activities have become more violent and more similar to those of street gangs. The fatal shooting was the second in a month in the district high schools.

A 15-year-old special education student was fatally stabbed in a New York City junior high school in an argument over sunglasses. The student and his assailant, another 15-year-old, were both students with emotional/ behavioral disorders attending Junior High School 25 in Manhattan's Lower East Side. The two students apparently had a long-standing feud that erupted into violence in a dispute over who owned the sunglasses. It was the second fatal stabbing of the school year in that school.

Shoved during an argument over a video game, a 14-year-old pointed two pistols at a younger cousin, shot him in the face, and then caught the bus to school. The victim, 13, was in critical condition at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Authorities said the older boy displayed a cavalier attitude toward the shooting. The boys had acquired the guns on their own and kept them hidden in the house.

In the United States today, we are inundated with reports of violent acts by children and youth—in the home, in the school, and in the community. The media bombards the public with stories of young people who are killed or killing, and there is no escape from the barrage. There is apparently an epidemic of aggression and violence among U.S. youth that is unparalled in history. Young people are hurting and killing one another for clothes, for hate, for love, for respect, and for no apparent reason at all.

Violence is by no means a new phenomenon in our society, but the escalation and severity of violence perpetrated by and against young people is frightening. The "wilding" incident in New York's Central Park, in which a female jogger was permanently injured after being assaulted and raped, shocked the entire nation. In Tampa, Florida, a young gunman was recorded on camera—smiling as his victim died. People across the world were horrified to learn that a young mother would deliberately consign her children to a watery grave. And, most recently, the world was stunned by the unprecedented bombing of a federal building in Oklahoma City that resulted in the massive deaths of children and adults, brought serious personal injury to many more, and caused inconceivable emotional distress on multitudes throughout the world.

Assault and rape have become a sport. Murder is a source of amusement. Children are to be discarded if they become a problem.

Are the Schools Safe?

Schools are still among the safest places for children to be, but even they are becoming battlegrounds. Although the problems do not usually originate in school, they often erupt there. In a survey by the National School Boards Association, 82% of 720 district school boards reported that violence in their schools had increased in the past 5 years, 78% said that student-on-student assaults were the most frequent form of violence, and 28% reported student attacks on teachers (Portner, 1994).

As a result of increased public concern, there has been a veritable torrent of programs, books, articles, conferences, conventions, institutes, forums, media presentations, and news articles on the topic of violence in children and youth. Every major organization and institution in the fields of mental health, education, human welfare, and government have held meetings and published information on violence (e.g., Comprehensive Health Education Foundation, 1994; *Coping with Violence*, 1994; National Association of School Psychologists, 1994; Reiss & Roth, 1993; Sautter, 1995; *Violence and Youth*, 1993). Every politician (or at least those who are recently running for office) has vowed his or her support of violence prevention programs in the home, school, and community. A safe school environment is a national goal for America's schools by the year 2000.

Violence prevention and intervention programs should be planned very carefully on the basis of the most accurate information available. The following paragraphs focus on some of the things known about aggression and violence in the schools and about school-aged children: (a) definitions of these terms, (b) factors associated with the emergence of aggressive and violent behaviors, and (c) effective or promising strategies for prevention and intervention in schools and communities.

Defining the Problem

According to the *American Heritage College Dictionary*. (Third Edition, 1993), aggression is defined as "hostile or destructive behavior or actions" (p. 26), while violence is defined as "physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing" (p. 1507). A task force of the American Psychiatric Association defined a violent person as "one who acts or has acted in such a way as to produce physical harm or destruction" (American Psychiatric Association, 1974). According to the American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, "interpersonal violence is behavior by persons against persons that threatens, attempts, or completes intentional infliction of physical or psychological harm" (*Violence and Youth*, 1993, p. 1).

For parents, educators, human service professionals, law enforcement agents, and government officials, the primary concern is the behavior of extremely aggressive, antisocial, and dangerous youngsters. This chapter explores interpersonal violence in children and youth, as described in the opening paragraphs.

What Is Known About the Causes of Aggression and Violence?

The origins of aggression and violence have been studied for many years by a great number of researchers from many disciplines (e.g., psychology, medicine, sociology, anthropology, biology, ecology, ethology, law, and education) in search of a cause that might lead to effective measures for prevention and intervention. It is generally accepted that there is no single cause—that violence is a "heterogeneous phenomenon" (Lewandowski & Forsstrom-Cohen, 1986, p. 58), which results from a complex interaction of biological, psychological, environmental, social, and behavioral variables.

Factors Associated with Violence and Aggression

Because research on aggression and violence has become quite sophisticated, a great deal is actually known about the factors associated with aggression and violence in children and adolescents. Some of those factors, on which there is considerable agreement in the literature, are listed and briefly discussed next.

Predisposing factors. Many factors related to the development of aggression and violent behavior in children and adolescents are beyond the school's purview—conditions in existence long before the child comes to school, sometimes even before a child is born. Among those predisposing factors are the following:

- Noxious prenatal influences (viral infections, maternal stress, or maternal substance abuse).
- Neurophysiological, cognitive, and psychiatric disorders.
- A difficult temperament, marked by impulsivity, irritability, and hyper-vigilance.
- Sociocultural expectations (expectations of the family, neighborhood, community, or society).
- Observational learning (modeling the behavior of parents, siblings, or television heroes).

- Reinforcement of violence and aggression. This can be direct (achieving material rewards, gaining social status, or escaping aversive treatment through aggressive acts) or indirect (vicarious reinforcement—observing others being reinforced for aggressive behavior).
- Victimization by others.
- Emotional deprivation (e.g., failure to bond or suffering psychological neglect).

Early predictors of violent behavior. Some of the factors predictive of later violent behavior can be observed in very young children. Among those factors are the following:

- Previous violent acts.
- Being the victim of abuse.
- Having a violent parent or sibling.
- Being cruel to animals.
- Pyromania (fire-setting).
- Temper tantrums.
- Verbal aggression.

Opportunity and precipitating events. Certain conditions or situations provide an enhanced opportunity for aggression or violence, among which are (a) release from incarceration, (b) reduction in supervision, (c) cessation of medication, (d) presence of a potential victim, and (e) availability of a weapon (particularly a handgun). In addition, certain situations serve as precipitating or trigger events, including the following:

- Disruption or loss of a love relationship (which is an extremely important trigger event for violent behavior in adolescents).
- Substance abuse. The youngster may not necessarily be under the influence of drugs or alcohol at the time of the act but may engage in violent behavior to procure the money to buy the substances.
- Insults to self-esteem. One of the most recent slang expressions used as an excuse for an aggressive act is, "He dissed me!" (showed disrespect).
- Invasion of personal space. Those who work with violent youth are well aware of the need to keep a reasonable distance and not encroach on their "space." A common reaction from a violent youngster is "Get out of my face!"
- Instruction from another. This may take place in youth gangs, in which the members are taught the procedures for mugging, car-jacking, and killing, as required for initiation into the gang or support of gang activities. Instruction also is part of military training.
- Frustration. This can result from failure to communicate, being unable to do required work, or being unable to satisfy personal needs.
- Aversive treatment (including severe punishment, harassment, or deprivation).

Family factors. Exposure to extreme violence within the household, particularly between caretakers, is strongly associated with children's violent behaviors. Further, abuse and exposure to other family violence go hand in hand (Lewis, 1992). Other family factors related to the aggression and violence include

- Inadequate parental management skills.
- Coercion (by both children and parents).
- Noncompliance by children.
- Harsh discipline (including physical punishment).
- Inconsistent discipline.
- Limited supervision.
- Parental distance and uninvolvement.
- Parental pathology and limitations (including mental illness, cognitive disabilities, alcoholism and drug abuse).
- Criminality in family members.
- Stressful external events (including poverty and homelessness).

Factors Contributing to Violence Within the School

Other conditions that influence the occurrence of violence within the school setting include

- Violence in society (and the reporting of violence in the media).
- Availability of weapons.
- Family and cultural influences.
- Drug traffic.
- Racial conflict.
- Gang/cult/group influences.
- Failure of the juvenile justice system.
- Inadequacy of school "structure" (policies, procedures, physical plant, and staff).

Conditions That Exacerbate Aggression/Violence

Wong, Slama, and Liberman (1987) have discussed the undesirable elements of the inpatient setting that might serve to precipitate aggression. These conditions include crowding; irritating noise; boredom; unsocialized group members; circumstances in which aggression secures some reward (including social status); and staff who are untrained, too few in number, or easily intimidated. In experimental situations, nox-

ious odors and high temperatures have also been found to provoke hostility and aggression (Lewis, 1992). These findings have obvious implications for the classroom and school environment.

What Works in Reducing Violence and Aggression?

Tolan and Guerra (1994) have conducted an empirical review of a number of interventions designed for the purpose of reducing or preventing youth violence. Although their conclusions are tentative, they suggest the following as among the most promising:

- Changing school organizational structures (staff, parent, and student involvement).
- Behavior modification.
- Cognitive-behavioral interventions (especially multicomponent programs).
- Inclusion of prosocial youth in peer groups.
- Family therapy (rather than individual or group therapies).
- Changing the roles of at-risk youth in the community.
- Decreasing media violence content and the exposure of children and adolescents to such violence.
- Bans of handguns and assault weapons, public education about gun safety, and design changes to improve safety and reduce lethality.

These researchers found that many programs are characterized by inadequate evaluation. They caution that "politically popular" interventions need careful evaluation and cautious application.

Summary

In summary, aggression and violence are complex problems with multiple causes, for which there are no simple solutions. A number of social, psychological, biological, environmental, and behavioral factors contribute to the development of such behavior in children and adolescents. There is some evidence that many of these factors can be effectively addressed in the home, school, and community.

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School-Based Programs for the Prevention and Treatment of Aggression and Violence: Why Aren't They More Effective?

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Introduction

Violence appears to be a relatively common phenomenon in the United States and people's acceptance of violence reflects a certain amc unt of societal ambivalence. Each year, millions of children witness and/or are victims of domestic violence (Dubowitz, 1986; Straus & Gelles, 1986) or violence perpetrated by others (Lee, 1993). Yet, Americans are hesitant to enact meaningful legislation to protect these children (Zorza, 1995). Moreover, violence in this country is a major theme in television, films, music, sports, literature, and children's toys (Peled, Jaffe, & Edleson, 1995). Often the media glamorizes violence and presents it as a commonplace and acceptable means of dealing with problems. Children and youth must somehow deal with the mixed messages they encounter related to aggression and violence as a means of social problem solving. Unfortunately, many children receive little meaningful assistance in their efforts to come to grips with aggressive and violent behavior.

Perhaps, as a result, the number of youth reported to engage in aggressive and violent behaviors has increased dramatically. Juvenile arrests for violent crimes increased 41% between the years 1982 and 1991 (U.S. Department of Justice, 1993). Alarmingly, the greatest increase is reported for children between the ages of 12 and 15 (Elliott, 1994). Moreover, these aggressive and violent acts are becoming more serious and lethal in nature. Elliott (1994) reported a 150% increase in the number of firearm-related homicides committed by juveniles since 1985. As might be expected, much of this violence and aggression takes place in or around the school setting. Therefore, teachers and other school personnel are increasingly likely to be called upon to deal with aggression and violence in the school. Yet, the majority of teachers and school administrators indicate that they feel ill-prepared to address the issues related to violence and aggression in their school (Furlong, Morrison, & Dear, 1994).

The need to develop effective prevention and intervention strategies to address aggression and violence in today's children and youth is critical. In response, literally hundreds of anger management, conflict resolution, and aggression prevention programs have been published. Yet few of these intervention programs have been empirically validated. Even when the effectiveness of a particular approach toward prevention or treatment has been examined, the results often are less than encouraging. For example, in a recent review of violence intervention programs, Dodge (1993) indicated that no intervention program reported to date has produced results that last longer than 1 year.

Fortunately, general understanding of the factors influencing the developmental course of aggression and violence in children and youth has grown significantly, allowing prevention and intervention efforts to be generated from a reasonable knowledge base. This chapter examines factors related to the development and maintenance of aggression and violence with an emphasis on their implications for intervention. Moreover, we will discuss some of the risk factors for the development and maintenance of aggression related to the school setting and the social context found there. The combination of these factors may help explain the lack of success reported in many school-based efforts to intervene on these challenging behaviors.

The Development of Aggression and Violence

The development of chronic aggressive and violent behavior is complex and appears to involve the interplay of multiple-risk factors. Individual factors, such as neurological, hormonal, or other physiological abnormalities stemming from genetics (Thapar & McGuffin, 1993), perinatal, traumatic, or other causes undoubtedly play some role in the development of aggressive and violent behavior. Familial, peer, and environmental characteristics, however, probably account for the greatest variation in the learning and expression of these behaviors.

Although considerable research has explored each of these factors, one factor by itself cannot explain much of the variance in the extent and/or intensity of violent behavior in the population, much less predict who will engage in such behavior. Only when there is a convergence of a number of variables does aggressive or violent behavior become more predictable (Guerra, Eron, Huesmann, Tolan & Van Acker, in press; Huesmann & Eron, 1984; Loeber & Tolan, 1992).

Caution, however, must be taken when attempting to identify students at risk for the development of serious aggressive and violent behavior. Experiencing a convergence of these risk factors does not necessarily lead to the display of aggressive or violent behavior for some children. Even in high-risk environments only a very small percentage of youth display chronic aggressive and violent behavior. Apparently, in addition to exposure to a number of the multiple-risk factors, children must learn and incorporate aggressive responses within their behavioral repertoire before it can be elicited by some external situation and/or stimulation from within the individual. Moreover, these same children must have failed to learn, or at least not learned as well, alternative prosocial behaviors that could be used in these same situations or as a response to these stimulations.

Most school-based intervention programs to date have not recognized the complexity of social interactions responsible for the development and support of aggression and violence. Most prevention and treatment approaches focus upon a single-risk factor and target characteristics of the individual child (e.g., values, beliefs, and cognitions) and fail to consider the social context within which the individual must function. For example, many of the current conflict-resolution programs may teach strategies that support improved functioning within the structured school setting, yet prove ineffective or inoperable in the neighborhood where the child must deal with his or her peers in unstructured situations.

Dealing with Violence and Aggression in the School Setting

Often intervention programs fail because educators fail to provide the type of instruction known to best promote the acquisition, mastery, and generalization of social problem-solving skills. Over the past several decades, the role of the school in children's acculturation has increased dramatically. The school setting presents many children with their first major introduction to the larger community. For the first time, children must learn to accommodate the expectations of adult caregivers other than family members or close family friends. Children also are required to interact with peers in a variety of new social situations. Most children adjust well to the new demands they confront within the school setting. Others, however, lack the understanding and/or skills necessary to successfully navigate within this complex social context (Van Acker, 1993).

Children enter school with the need to learn to read and write. Schools have accepted this challenge. Many of these same children, however, enter school without having developed the effective prosocial strategies necessary to solve interpersonal problems, negotiate conflict situations, and deal with their emotions. Instead, these children have learned to employ aggressive and violent responses when confronted with social dilemmas. Parents may directly or indirectly reinforce this behavior by encouraging children to "stand up for themselves." Ultimately, these behaviors become the child's preferred response. Schools, in turn, often fail to effectively teach the alternative prosocial strategies necessary to replace the aggressive approaches.

Children who display aggressive and violent behaviors often possess a restricted repertoire of solutions to common social problems (Dodge, Price, Bachorowski, & Newman, 1990; Haskett, 1990). Additionally, research suggests that aggressive children frequently distort socially benign situations resulting in attributions of hostility in others (Dodge, Pettit, McClaskey, & Brown, 1986). When problems arise, they resort to antisocial and aggressive solutions that too frequently have been modeled in their environment (e.g., family, community, and/or media).

In essence, these children enter the school setting with a set of solutions to social problems involving behaviors that in the long run will limit their success. An academic equivalent might be the student who has somehow mistakenly learned that "4 + 4 = 9." This student has previously been reinforced for this erroneous answer and now believes it to be the "correct" response. The answer "9" no longer requires active arithmetic computation as it has been incorporated as an "automatic learned response" to the stimulus of "4 + 4 = __." Most teachers will quickly realize that the task of teaching this student the de-

sired answer ("4 + 4 = 8") will be complicated by this prior learning. The student will require systematic instruction and practice beyond that required by a student who has not mislearned the computation (Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1987).

The same is true of students who have incorporated aggressive or violent acts as their method of solving social problems. These children do not lack a response to social problems; they have a solution, they aggress against others. In fact, these students no longer have to consciously think about the possible solutions to social problems; they simply overgeneralize their use of aggression.

Teachers sometimes overlook the automaticity of behavioral patterns. For example, when first learning to drive an automobile with a manual transmission, the process of shifting gears while disengaging the clutch and brake is a complex set of synchronized behaviors that requires significant motor planning and conscious effort. As time passes, however, these synchronized movements become automatic and require very little conscious thought. In fact, only when confronted with an unusual situation (e.g., stopped on a steep hill with another car stopped close behind) will the typical driver have to think about his or her effort to shift gears and continue up the hill. The same phenomenon characterizes the enactment of aggression by some children. When confronting a student who has aggressed against another, the teacher will often ask him if he can think of alternative solutions. When the student proves capable of generating alternatives, the teacher may assume the student clearly should have known better and she needs only to punish the undesired responses. What the teacher may fail to recognize is that the behavioral pattern of aggression probably required little or no active planning (Huesmann, 1988).

Systematic instruction in more socially acceptable strategies must be provided to solve problems. Moreover, these students need extensive opportunities to practice newly acquired skills and feedback on their performance. Procedures that lend themselves to these processes include

1. Systematic instruction of desired prosocial behaviors.
2. Opportunities for incidental learning.
3. Implementation of instructional consequences for undesired target behaviors.

Each of these will be discussed briefly in the following paragraphs.

Systematic Instruction of Prosocial Behavior

Social problem-solving and conflict-resolution skills need to be taught just as academic skills must be. Returning to the example of 4 + 4 = ___, we realize that the process of teaching this algorithm to children requires the use of direct instruction (e.g., the possible use of manipulatives), guided practice, and finally independent practice and generalization. Similarly, students need instruction in a variety of social problem-solving strategies. Systematic instruction in prosocial behavior should include identification of a target behavior (e.g., negotiating solutions in a conflict situation), provision of instruction in the desired behavior (discussing concepts or modeling behaviors), opportunities for guided practice (role play or practice with supervision), and opportunities for independent practice and generalization (many opportunities to negotiate problems before adult intervention). Existing social skill training, social problem-solving, and conflict-resolution curricula can be extremely useful in the identification of important target skills. Most of these programs, however, fail to provide enough systematic instruction and practice to promote generalization and automaticity of the target skill (Tolan & Guerra, 1994; Van Acker, 1993).

When introducing arithmetic facts, teachers realize that children are likely to make mistakes. When these errors are made, error correction procedures generally are provided in a consistent yet understanding fashion. Teachers do not want students to become distraught about their mistakes or to develop a fear for the subject matter being taught. A similar approach must be applied when teaching social problem-solving skills. As children attempt to deal with social conflicts, errors will be made. Teachers will be required to present consequences to help children learn. It is the consistency of a consequence, however, not the strength of the punishment that is most conducive to learning. Educators engaged in efforts to change children's behavior must clearly recognize that behavior change is a process and not an event.

Instructional planning that allows for "double dipping" wherein both academic and social problem-solving skills can be taught together must be maximized within the curriculum. Teachers will need to find ways to weave social skill instruction throughout existing academic curricula. For example, in reading instruction, efforts to select stories that provide conflict situations between characters would allow teachers to promote important social skill instruction while assessing reading comprehension and prediction abilities. Students could be asked to identify the emotions portrayed by each character and the nature of the conflict from each character's perspective and to generate solutions to the conflict situation.

Instruction must also provide students with information regarding why individuals should or should not engage in various behaviors. Little is gained if children avoid hitting another child simply out of the fear of being caught and punished. Rather, children need to learn to refrain from hitting because hitting another person can cause them harm (Coval-

eskie, 1992). To this end, teachers should provide active instruction that allows children to examine their own behavior and that of others in light of current social morals and values. Students should be introduced to information on people who display important prosocial responses. For example, traditional explorations of events, such as the Holocaust, oftentimes concentrate on the victims and the perpetrators. Such instruction could be enhanced significantly if it also provides information regarding those individuals who, against significant odds, acted to rescue the victims (Cohen, 1993).

Curwin and Mendler (1988) suggest that the child's basic need to display altruistic behavior is a frequently untapped resource for the promotion of prosocial behavior. Most of us have observed at one time or another even very young children reaching out to comfort another child in pain. This altruistic motivation could be employed in a fashion that again allows for the development of both academic and prosocial skills. For example, students could be engaged in an activity where they write to elderly individuals in convalescent homes within their communities. The resulting pen-pal relationship could be extremely meaningful and rewarding for both participants.

Incidental Teaching of Prosocial Behaviors

In addition to planned systematic instruction, teachers must take advantage of the multiple opportunities to teach problem-solving skills incidentally within the classroom. Throughout the course of the day, a wide variety of situations manifest themselves that would allow the teacher to assist students in generating solutions to social problems. In fact, research suggests that teachers spend more time dealing with problematic student behavior than they do with any other content area (Goodlad, 1984). Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, teachers sometimes fail to employ effective teaching strategies to help students manage these problems (Van Acker, 1993). For example, when two students engage in a disagreement, far too frequently the teacher will simply separate the students or generate a solution which both students must accept. However, the point at which a student conflict has arisen, but prior to either student's loss of self-control, is a perfect time to employ incidental teaching. Students can be asked to employ strategies (previously taught) to generate potential solutions to the problem as well as identify consequences of the solution. This could be done with the students as a group or simply with the disputants.

However a teacher chooses to provide this incidental instruction, the key to successful conflict resolution and development of prosocial behavior is to build upon previously developed skills and to allow processing time after the experience. Many teachers might object to taking the time needed to provide this type of instruction and feedback to the student, yet they generally expend significant periods of time engaged in ineffective procedures to reduce undesired behaviors (Goodlad, 1984; Van Acker, 1993). Instruction and feedback related to the development of prosocial behavior, especially when taught as part of the existing curriculum, need not require an additional expenditure of time.

Developing Consequences That Avoid Suppressionary Strategies and That Provide Instruction in Prosocial Behavior

Undoubtedly, there will be times when a conflict between two students, or the behavior of a single student, will have moved beyond the point where incidental teaching seems reasonable, and the delivery of a consequence is deemed appropriate. Unfortunately, schools traditionally invest heavily in the autocratic use of suppressionary strategies (e.g., delivery of aversive consequences, suspension, or expulsion) when dealing with challenging behaviors, especially violent and aggressive behavior. For example, Sugai, Kameenui, and Colvin (1993, as cited in Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995) in an analysis of discipline referrals indicated that more than 90% of the school disciplinary actions employed purely negative consequences. While aversive consequences may be in order to help students become aware of the limits for acceptable behavior, an overreliance upon aversive strategies may increase the potential for student alienation from the teacher and school. Moreover, the presentation of an aversive is likely to generate resistance and may trigger intensified aggression and violence from the student as a means of counter control. Suppressionary strategies have not proven successful in effecting lasting change in behavior (Steuer, Applefield, & Smith, 1971; Wood, 1978).

A number of schools have begun to implement instructional consequences for undesirable behavior. For example, when students are involved in a fight, they are provided the opportunity to participate in an anger management program in lieu of suspension. A creative extension of this process involves students in the development of a series of materials to be utilized in an anger-management program for younger children. These students develop videotapes, coloring books, stories, and role-plays designed to help younger children become aware of why it is important to control one's anger and how best to solve social problems without fighting. In this way, students are allowed to explore information and ideas that might prove difficult to introduce to older students as part of a curriculum designed for their benefit.

It still remains that many teachers and school officials fail to apply the knowledge they possess related to the process of learning when they are confronted with challenging behaviors. Increased learning, whether of mathematics or prosocial skills, has

been associated with the systematic presentation of the material to be learned, increased opportunities to apply the knowledge or practice the skill, and meaningful feedback. As with any good instructional program, a great deal of variety, creativity, and effort on the part of the teacher will be needed to promote acquisition and generalization of targeted prosocial skills.

The Identification of Critical Developmental Periods for the Implementation of Intervention

Many of the school-based prevention and treatment programs have failed to take advantage of what is known about the development of aggression and violence. Examination of the epidemiological research suggests that two distinct pathways can be identified for the development of these behaviors.

The first, and most serious, pathway involves a small percentage of children who begin to display aggressive behaviors in early childhood. Some children display behavioral styles that are more or less aggressive across a variety of situations as early as 12 months of age (Kagen, 1988). Aggressiveness becomes a relatively stable behavioral pattern by 4 to 9 years of age for some children (Caspi, Elder, & Bem, 1987; Eron & Huesmann, 1990; Moffitt, 1990; Patterson, Capaldi, & Bank, 1991). An estimated 5% to 8% of males and 3% to 6% of females display this pattern of antisocial behavior (Tracy, Wolfgang, & Figlio, 1990). A considerable body of research has demonstrated a significant relationship between this pattern of childhood aggression and the perpetration of serious antisocial, violent, and criminal behavior in adulthood (Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Moffitt, 1990). The more aggressive child is likely to become both the more aggressive adult and the more antisocial and criminal adult.

The second pathway, involving the greater number of youth, is characterized by time-limited violence and aggression displayed during adolescence. Aggressive and violent behavior is relatively common among adolescents. Estimates suggest that between 20% and 40% of males and 4% and 15% of females report participating in one or more serious acts of violence (Elliott, 1994; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Typically, youth begin to initiate these aggressive and violent behaviors following 12 years of age with the highest risk for initiation between 15 and 16 years of age. Participation in aggressive and violent behavior for the vast majority of these youth, however, drops dramatically after age 17 (Elliott, 1994). Thus, for most of these youth, violent and aggressive acts represent a behavioral repertoire that begins and ends within the adolescent years (Tolan, 1987).

Interestingly, the nature, frequency, and intensity of the aggressive and violent acts perpetrated by the two groups do not appear to differ significantly (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Thus, both pathways produce potentially dangerous individuals that require serious consideration for prevention and intervention services.

The identification of these two pathways holds profound implications for the timing of meaningful prevention and treatment programs. The fact that the most persistent perpetrators initiate their aggressive and violent behaviors within the first decade of life supports the development of intervention efforts beginning within the preschool setting and continuing throughout the developmental years. Efforts could be provided at two distinct levels. Primary intervention programs, including general emotion recognition, anger management, and conflict resolution strategies could be provided for all children in the school. More intensive prevention and treatment programs, perhaps involving family members, should be developed and delivered to students specifically identified as at risk for the development of serious antisocial behavior. This latter type of intervention is dependent upon the reliable and valid identification of students at risk for the development of aggression and violence.

A number of effective systematic screening approaches have been proposed to identify children at risk for the development of antisocial behavior (Walker et al., 1995). Screening should be conducted regularly, starting in preschool, to identify students showing initial signs that suggest the development of antisocial behavior. Multiple-gate procedures that employ a variety of respondents (e.g., parents, teachers, peers, and observers) and that cross contexts (e.g., home, classroom, and playground) should be used when possible as they help to provide the broadest perspective on the target student's risk status (Walker et al., 1995). For example, the Early Screening Project (ESP; Walker, Severson, & Feil, 1994) employs a three-gate procedure. Initially, teachers are asked to nominate and rank-order students manifesting behaviors that suggest either internalizing or externalizing behavior problems (Gate 1). Teachers are then asked to rate the behavior of the three highest ranked students under each category on a checklist and a rating scale. Those students whose scores on these measures exceed local norms (Gate 2) are then observed in both structured and unstructured situations. Data related to responsiveness to teacher requests and peer interactions are collected. Parents also are asked to rate their child's behavioral adjustment (Gate 3). Students exceeding age- and gender-appropriate norms are recommended for early intervention programs and services.

Screening efforts have the distinct advantage of being proactive in nature and allow for all students in a classroom to be assessed. Systematic screening

programs allow students to be identified far earlier than traditional reactive referral procedures. Aggressive behavior patterns appear much more responsive to early intervention than programs delivered only after the aggressive patterns have become well established (Rutherford & Nelson, in press). Routine screening beginning in preschool and carried out annually throughout the elementary, middle, and high school years would allow school personnel to more effectively provide for at-risk students as patterns of problem behavior arise.

Interestingly, the timing of the second pathway to aggressive behavior coincides almost exactly with the transition of children from the elementary school to the middle/junior high school setting. Moreover, these children demonstrate a dramatic drop in aggressive and violent behavior at approximately the same time that they complete high school. This correspondence in timing could suggest more than simple coincidence. As children move into the middle school setting, they confront new demands that require greater levels of self-monitoring and self-control, and the display of conflict-resolution skills beyond that previously required in the elementary school setting. As they move from classroom to classroom throughout the course of the day, students must interact with increased numbers of students, providing new peer associations, and an increased number of teachers. New, and frequently stressful, situations arise as students wrestle with lockers and transport themselves and their materials over greater distances through crowded hallways. Far too often, some children have not learned the necessary skills to solve these new social problems in an acceptable, prosocial manner. Perhaps they were not required to practice these skills to a level of mastery while in their elementary school programs.

With the involvement of multiple teachers across the day, students also are confronted with the task of meeting the social and academic demands of a variety of adults. The probability for clashes between personalities increases. Moreover, some teachers in these classrooms appear to take the approach that they teach subjects (e.g., math or science) not students. The willingness to adapt and modify curriculum and behavioral expectations for individual children is diminished considerably. Unlike the elementary teacher who must deal with a given child throughout the school day (increasing his or her motivation to modify the program), the middle/junior high teacher typically works with a given child for only 50 to 55 min per day. This limited exposure and the increased number of students involved decreases teacher knowledge of individual children and results in greater resistance to the individualization and modification of the existing curriculum.

Students at risk for the development of serious antisocial behavior often manifest actions teachers find intolerable and difficult to address (Gunter, Jack, Depaepe, Reed, & Harrison, 1994). As a result, teachers begin to interact with these children in a fashion that increases the student's risk for academic failure. For example, the interactions of preschoolers and student teachers were examined by Carr, Taylor, and Robinson (1991). They identified two groups of students. One group they called "problem children" as they displayed a variety of challenging behaviors such as hitting, kicking, biting, and throwing objects. The second group of children were generally well behaved and compliant. These were labeled "nonproblem children." Problem children were provided less instruction, and when activities were assigned, they were those least likely to promote resistance from the student. Carr and his associates concluded that the students employed their conflictual behavior to avoid and/or escape more direct instruction and difficult assignments. Thus, teachers, perhaps unconsciously, reinforce (negative reinforcement) these aggressive and violent behaviors. This "curriculum of noninstruction" (Gunter et al., 1994) has been observed in a variety of educational settings serving students with challenging behaviors (e.g., general education classrooms or self-contained special education classrooms). As a result these students fail to master the knowledge and skills necessary to support success as they progress through school. The gap between themselves and their successful peers becomes ever greater.

Prevention strategies might well concentrate on the structural aspects of the middle/junior high and high schools that increase the probability of aggressive and violent behavior. Increased student and teacher support may be warranted. Consultation and collaboration services could be available to teachers to assist them in the modification of academic and behavioral programs for at-risk students. Counseling services involving both school personnel and peer counselors could provide increased support for students as they attempt to deal with the heightened interpersonal problems frequently confronting children during their adolescent years. Peer-mediation programs to assist students in conflict management have been employed by a number of schools with apparent success (Van Acker, Grant, Moriarity, & MacDonald, in press).

Some schools, especially those with high student mobility, have attempted to take advantage of the adolescent's need to be accepted by a meaningful peer group. Utilizing a modification of the circle-of-friends strategy (common in special education), these schools have identified a number of peer groupings characterized by normative beliefs, values, and behaviors promoting prosocial behavior. As at-risk children are identified and/or moved into the school district, efforts are made to imbed the at-risk student within the new circle-of-friends.

Given the increased number of students engaging in aggressive and violent behaviors during ado-

lescence, middle, junior high, and high schools would do well to develop disciplinary programs capable of addressing the needs of this population. As discussed in a previous section, school personnel should avoid an overreliance on aversive and punitive consequences that place the bond between themselves and the child in jeopardy. The development of creative, instructional consequences should be maximized for this age group. Students could be involved in seminars that address anger management or strategies for dealing with authority as part of the consequences for undesired aggressive and violent behavior. When possible, these students should be involved in projects that increase their responsibility and level of involvement with key school personnel in hopes of developing supportive relationships. Intensive peer and family treatment programs have been identified that show promise for the remediation of aggressive and violent behavior for some students (Gottfredson, 1982; Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

Conclusion

Over the past decade, issues related to the prevention and treatment of childhood and youth aggression and violence have received increased attention. Numerous violence intervention programs have been developed and almost all have failed to document any great success. We have attempted to present three key characteristics of aggression and violence emerging from the epidemiological literature that provide significant insight as to why previous prevention and treatment efforts have not proven effective. These include

1. Aggression and violence are complex behaviors impacted by multiple risk factors that cross a variety of social contexts.
2. Aggressive and violent behaviors are learned behaviors that can be unlearned.
3. There are two distinct pathways to the development of violence and aggression.

Traditional efforts to intervene upon the development and display of aggressive and violent behavior typically have focused upon a single psychosocial context in the child's life. Aggression and violence appear to be multiply determined responses to risk factors that cross the range of social contexts within which the child relates (e.g., family, peer group, and classroom). Programs that target only a narrow segment of the child's world (e.g., the school setting) will have little chance of demonstrating skill acquisition and generalization to other contexts. Intervention programs must be developed that cross multiple social contexts and provide for practice of new skills across a variety of social settings.

School personnel must increase their awareness of the role they play in both the prevention and treatment of aggression and violence and the exacerbation of these behaviors. Teachers and administrators must evaluate current approaches to addressing aggression and violence. Developing a meaningful intervention program consists of more than simply increasing the arsenal of suppressionary tactics one can apply to consequate undesired behaviors. In their efforts to teach and promote effective social problem-solving skills in children, educators must employ the knowledge they possess related to child development and learning. This will require renewed efforts to weave social and academic development together within existing curricula. Students need to be taught effective problem-solving strategies and provided ample opportunity to practice these new skills across a variety of settings.

Most current efforts in the prevention and treatment of aggression and violence often are initiated too late in the individual's development. Aggressive patterns of responding not only emerge very early in life for a segment of the population but also appear to be relatively stable, lasting well into adulthood. Early aggressive behaviors such as incivility, boisterousness, and noncompliance (Cook, Kendziersky, & Thomas, 1983) are predictive of future serious antisocial behavior. Unfortunately, these behaviors often are overlooked until more serious actions emerge. By the time such behavior increases in seriousness to the level necessary for the child to be referred for traditional intervention services, the behavior is no longer readily amenable to change. Intervention efforts, therefore, must begin early and extend throughout the child's developmental years. Efforts should be targeted toward both the total population in the school and students who demonstrate significant risk.

Many of the children for whom aggression and violence are most problematic live in environments characterized by poverty, neglect, and violence. Alex Kotlowitz (1991), in his stirring novel, *There Are No Children Here*, paints a vivid portrait of the fear, hopelessness, and degradation children living in many inner-city neighborhoods experience daily. Only the most naive among us would suggest that single-dimension programs, delivered over relatively brief periods of time (e.g., peer-mediation conflict-resolution strategies and anger-management programs delivered weekly in the classroom), could hope to alter these children's attitudes and behaviors. For these children, a more encompassing and sustained approach, carried out much more frequently throughout the developmental years, and affecting several psychosocial contexts and settings is necessary to have any lasting effect on aggressive and violent behavior. Such an approach requires significant commitment on the part of not only the school but also the community it serves.

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Programs That Work in Reducing Aggression and Violence: Emerging Best Practices in Homes, Schools, and Communities

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Despite its tremendous impact on society, relatively few strategies for decreasing violence have been tested empirically (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). In this chapter, apparent critical actions are summarized, and instances where such actions have been used and evaluated are noted.

Two things appear clear. There are no quick fixes; generalizable skills and cognitive restructuring take time. Nor are there single fixes; multivariate or multiple interventions are usually required. Proactive steps are needed that have long- and short-term payoffs in changed contingency structures affecting behavior, changed cognitive structures, and changed ecologies to support youths' nonviolent decisions.

Action 1: Plan for Crisis Management

Lacking protection and safety, youth resort to self-defensive aggression, which often gives them increased effectance in their worlds. School-safety steps include

- *Write a crisis plan (Watson, Poda, Miller, Rice & West, 1993).*
  Schools and communities are learning to develop proactive reactions to violent episodes (Long, 1992).
- *Give staff continuing crisis-intervention and safety training.*
  More schools are teaching staff how to de-escalate tension and anger, providing information such as Stephens'(1994) guidelines for handling a student wielding a weapon. Life Space Crisis Intervention (Long, 1994) provides structured training in verbal mediation skills, which is even more valuable when added to behavioral skills and crisis training (e.g., Cornell University's Therapeutic Crisis Intervention).
- *Prepare the environment, then declare the school a neutral zone.*
  Many schools remove graffiti, survey security needs, institute new procedures, and declare the school a neutral zone for gangs. Community members work together to provide neighborhood escorts. They meet with police for problem solving which leads to community actions, such as parent agreements and park paintouts.
- *Debrief youth and colleagues following a crisis.*
  The possibility always exists that some crisis participants will emerge showing symptoms of post traumatic stress. Providing support opportunities, such as those described by Long (1992), can prevent some devastating long term effects.

Action 2: Develop and Review Contingency Management Structures

- *Become informed about youth crime in the community.*
  Talk to local police or others for information on locally operating criminal groups who prey on youth. Police and local agencies can often provide gang names and numbers, identifiers, and recruitment methods.
- *Analyze functional contingencies for representative youth.*

What do youths gain by violent acts and other criminal behavior? How could the needs those gains address be met by more prosocial means which the school and community could foster? Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern (1990) identify four basic needs in youth: affiliation, achievement, autonomy, and altruism. Until the community is willing to support the needs of youth, they are likely to seek fulfillment by less desirable means.

- *Review and revise dress and discipline codes.*
  Dress codes today prevent students from "representing" by wearing gang colors. Some public schools have even adopted school uniforms.
- *Analyze behavior in high risk time periods and settings.*
  Identify times and places where trouble often occurs. Plan changes for those sites and time slots to make crises less likely; plan how to handle situations if problems occur.
- *Analyze staff use of attention, privileges, and consequences of behaviors.*
  Some New York City high schools have been downsized and redesigned to foster stronger adult/student relationships. Staff are requested to respond three times positively when a student is appropriate for each interaction when the student is inappropriate. This can alter school relationships and climates dramatically.
- *Develop a working philosophy that fosters caring relationships.*
  Many youth lack positive adult mentors and quickly become alienated. Television often replaces adult mediation, teaches violent ways to solve problems, and competes with youths' more adaptive learning. Television viewing time at age 8 is associated with seriousness of crimes at age 30 (Centerwall, 1989).
- *Provide adult mediators of the culture.*
  Big Brothers, Big Sisters, Foster Grandparents, or rites of passage programs provide adult mediators. These programs structure the mentor role, but any adult in a youth's world may be important. Schools can help by hiring low-power-need staff who respect and involve themselves with youth. Youth recognize subtle cues when an adult wants to control more than help, and perceived power needs invalidate an adult's efforts.
- *Develop contingency management biases with staff.*
  Firm action is important, but adult counter-aggression only confirms youths' beliefs in aggression as the way to "win." Avoiding aversive methods is easier when staff use consequences that are consistent with a clear, positive philosophy.
- *Provide predictable consequences for behavior.*
  Provide consequences for violent acts swiftly and firmly; bring charges for assaults or weapons violations (Stephens, 1994). Court action alone is unlikely to eliminate violence. Equally important is providing predictable, firm, but largely positive consequences for other behaviors. Many schools succeed by avoiding conflict cycles proactively (Long, 1994) and reinforcing productive behavior with meaningful activities and social events.
- *Schedule times to debrief the effects of planned contingencies.*
  No plan works as well as it did on the drawing board; things change. Periodic reviews and revisions are necessary.
- *Employ self-control and peer-assisted strategies.*
  Build in nonviolent alternatives for conflict resolution. The Omaha Public Schools and others have instituted peer-mediation programs to teach youth skills for nonviolent resolution of conflicts.

Action 3: Develop and Review Curriculum and Activity Needs

Youthful energy demands meaningful activity and functional skills. Some communities organize programs of after-school activities and in-school extracurricular events. Data from a South Carolina school enhancement effort to decrease student violence have been especially encouraging (Gottsfredson, 1986).

- *Provide prosocial group alternatives.*
  Many schools and communities are sponsoring prosocial peer group programs, such as Explorer Scouts or ethnic young men's clubs. Goldstein and Glick (1994) describe the development of "prosocial gangs" to meet youth affiliation needs. Where group leadership is taught through guided group routines, youth build skills to enter prosocial groups successfully.
- *Review academic goals and instructional methods.*
  Youth who are not offered meaningful activity, who are either bored or frustrated by instructional demands, or who feel an adult's direction reflects the need to control will find ways other than assigned tasks to amuse themselves.
- *Emphasize job preparation and training for youth.*
  Internships and job coaching programs have led many high-risk youth with behavior problems to increased employability (e.g., Jobs for America's Graduates, 1987).
- *Develop a curriculum component for teaching critical television viewing.*
  Expand youth awareness of choices by teaching them to recognize when they are being manipu-

lated. An example is television advertising which supports violent programming to sell products. Television viewing is directly related to increases in youth violence (Centerwall, 1989). Vooij and Van Der Voort (1993) tested an instructional sequence for critical television viewing which succeeded in changing children's attitudes about what they watched. We are what we eat and what we experience. We can change who we are by making different choices in our mental nutrients.

- *Teach youth to identify and use community resources.* Youth cannot use the community to meet their affiliation, recreation, or support needs if they are unaware of what is there or how to access it.
- *Teach recreational activities and expressive skills.* Create or identify a wide variety of active clubs and interest groups. Physical activity alone sometimes decreases disruptive behavior. Adventure programs (such as Project Adventure in Hamilton, MA) and outdoor experiences (such as Outward Bound) are sometimes used with violent or high-risk youth. Artist-in-residence programs enable youth to express themselves through creative writing, art, drama, or music.

Action 4: Develop a Cognitive Curriculum

- *Provide youth with new cognitive skills and paradigms.* A meta-analysis by Izzo and Ross' (1990) found cognitive interventions to be most effective for reducing recidivism of adjudicated youth. These strategies include cognitive behavior modification, anger management training, social skills training, and problem solving training.
- *Deglamorize violence and the criminal lifestyle.* Since 1982 Paramount, California schools have operated an antigang, antiviolence curriculum, greatly reducing students' willingness to consider joining a gang (Ostos, 1993).
- *Provide experiences to teach empathy and altruism.* Agee (1986) and others dealing with juvenile justice employ victim awareness and restitution strategies, using perspective-taking role-plays. Altruism projects such as helping in homeless shelters or nursing homes enable youth to see others' needs and feel good about helping (e.g., Brendtro et al., 1990).

Action 5: Plan and Set Goals with Youth and Family

Multisystem and multiagency efforts to serve both children and families are increasing. Two such programs are Cleveland's Positive Education Program, jointly funded by education and mental health, and Illinois' education and mental health programming in regular school settings (Eber & Osuch, 1995). Services involving both child and family are increasingly delivered by "care coordinators," often based on the Re-ED liaison teacher-counselor role (Cole & Poe, 1993). The South Carolina family-based multisystemic treatment program reports strong effectiveness data (Henggeler, Melton, & Smith, 1992).

- *Identify and train individual(s) for the liaison role.* Ask and listen: What are the biggest needs now? The biggest helps? Plan together to meet goals and build on strengths. Youth and families need to see their behaviors as personal choices with alternatives enabling them to make changes. Identify family resources; establish family-support groups.
- *Involve family members in program operation.* The Positive Education Program in Cleveland annually serves 1,600 children and youth with serious emotional problems in a variety of school and service programs. Over 10% of Positive Education Program staff are parents of former students; other parents participate on each site's Parent Advisory Board or on the Board of Trustees.

Action 6: Develop Collaborative Relationships

Collaborative interagency and intersystem action is critical. System and agency territoriality is too costly. Each of the many roles is important as is team problem solving because expertise from any single discipline is insufficient.

- *Develop in-house team structures, and train staff in teamwork.*
- *Create a forum for cross-agency group planning and regular communication; meet with others to solve mutual problems.* Be creative in meeting needs; little things can mean a lot—membership to a Y sports program, a prom dress, the fee for music lessons. Flexible funding and mutual planning can meet many highly frustrating youth and family needs at low cost.
- *Recruit individuals to contribute their skills to help.* Volunteers in many communities provide assistance without charge; for example, some plastic surgeons remove gang tattoos on request. When a need exists, locate a resource and ask.
- *Secure needed consultation, adding team members when indicated.* Not all depressed youth turn their despair into withdrawal or suicidal behavior; others are

highly irritable and visit their frustration on people around them, sometimes through violence. Special educators have become more aware of the need for depression screening and both medical and nonmedical follow-up.

- *Plan for community and policy action; inform local officials.*

Action 7: Invest Heavily in Continuing Learning

Parents, educators, and others cannot teach what they do not know or do not believe. Learning is a lifelong process, not an end state. Staff development must be ongoing.

- *Develop a systematic training plan; assign team responsibility.*
- *Evaluate training effects by collecting relevant service data.*
- *Review data and revise the training plan on a regular basis.*

A Final Word: Resources

Mutual support multiplies available resources to decrease violence. As Lenore Behar says, "Don't re-invent the wheel; make it better." Educators can focus on the solutions and support each other by celebrating both successes and problem-solving efforts.

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School Aggression and Violence: Reactions from Practitioners in the Field

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The Growing Challenge of Aggression and Violence in the Schools

This group discussion focused on the following issues: (a) known characteristics of and the factors that contribute to aggression, (b) short-term intervention goals, and (c) long-term prevention goals. Each of these issues is briefly summarized and discussed in the following paragraphs.

Factors That Contribute to Aggression

There is widespread agreement that aggression is an immediate and critical problem. Aggression and/or violence is occurring daily in schools, and it is impeding students' development and learning. Global factors identified by this chapter's group as contributing to aggression include lack of meaningful instruction, limited resources, and inadequate school facilities.

First, schools and communities are not supporting instruction that is meaningful to students, especially to those students who may deviate from the "norm" (such as students with aggressive/violent behavior). For example, many students who demonstrate aggressive behavior do not have supportive home environments that meet their basic needs. The focus of these students may be on survival and fulfilling basic needs such as food and sleep. The school's focus, however, is on academic achievement and increasing standardized test scores. In addition, many school administrators have attitudes of "zero tolerance" (i.e., if a child demonstrates aggressive/violent behavior, he or she is removed from school). As a result, the student's needs are still unmet and neither are the goals of the school. The group suggested that this situation reinforces the student's feeling of rejection and causes increased aggressive/violent behavior. Often many of these students have learning difficulties and are not motivated by the traditional academic curriculum in the schools. A participant in this chapter's group suggested that developing a curriculum that provides students with a "sense of self" and "belonging" may motivate them to become a part of their school.

This group also cited schools' limited resources as a factor in dealing with agressive students. Demands that outnumber the resources can have multiple negative consequences. One consequence, for example, is that few teachers have been trained to intervene and deal effectively with aggressive/violent behavior in students. Many schools and treatment programs rely upon male teachers to intervene and to intimidate the student instead of providing teachers with proactive tools to reduce student aggression and violence.

Lack of adequate facilities is another consequence of schools' limited resources. Often schools are overcrowded, classrooms lack the materials and space conducive to a learning environment, and school buildings are in poor structural condition. Frequently, the aternative schools to which students with aggressive and violent behavior are assigned are located in older school buildings that have been abandoned by other programs.

Short-Term Interventions

It is commonly agreed that immediate attention should be given to reducing aggression and violence in the schools. Several short-term interventions were suggested by this group, including (a) revising the

school environment and curriculum to be responsive to students' needs; (b) providing curricular activities that motivate students and reinforce their progress and learning; and (c) teaching skills that support the needs and goals of the student.

The group also agreed that families should be a collaborative part of the intervention process. Parents should be taught to intervene when their children demonstrate aggressive/violent behavior at home. After-school programs should be expanded for students of all ages to provide positive alternatives to unsupervised after-school conditions.

Finally, the group agreed that when aggressive/violent behavior does occur, the consequences for students should be natural, strict, and consistently enforced (e.g., if students commit a crime, they should receive immediate, appropriate punishment for that crime). It helps neither the school nor the students to treat students differently depending upon individual variables. For example in one school, students identified as having emotional/behavioral disorders were allowed special dressing privileges; namely, they were the only students allowed to wear hats in school. The group believed that this differential treatment may lead to more deviant behavior in these students and foster the belief that they are exempt from other school rules besides the one banning hats.

Long-Term Prevention

It was suggested that long-term prevention of aggression and violence begin with changing the entire atmosphere of the school and community from inflexible and insensitive to responsive and safe for all students. The community as a whole needs to develop a positive philosophy and to build collaborative services for all students with an emphasis on prevention of aggression and violence. Input is needed from school personnel, students, families, and community agency staff. Schools and community agencies need to work collaboratively so that children and families can obtain the resources needed to allow the children to grow and develop in a positive manner. As suggested in the literature, the media, as an integral part of the community, could be asked to play a role in discouraging aggression and violence and encouraging positive interactions (Furlong & Morrison, 1994).

In addition, the group suggested that there be a continuum of prevention services beginning with early intervention services for young children "at risk." Families should be an integral part of these services and parenting programs should be incorporated into them. Intervention services should begin as early as possible (e.g., at birth) with young children and families who are at risk (e.g., teen parents) for developing negative interaction patterns.

Strategies to Combat Aggression and Violence In the Schools

Discussion on strategies that may help to decrease aggression and violence in the schools centered around three topics: (a) What is missing from our schools? (b) What are the school-wide best practices? and (c) What are the classroom-level best practices? The following is a summary of that discussion.

What Is Missing From the Schools?

As mentioned previously, an atmosphere that is accepting and adaptable to the needs of students (particularly students who demonstrate aggression and violence) is missing from many schools. Specifically, the organization, structure, and curriculum are not responsive to these students' needs, and what often results is a negative interaction pattern between students and teachers. These "coercive patterns" may develop for several reasons: (a) students learn that they can receive attention (either positive or negative) for demonstrating inappropriate behaviors; (b) students learn that they can escape difficult tasks and academically related work by demonstrating inappropriate behaviors; and (c) once developed, "coercive interaction patterns" are difficult to change (see Gunter, Jack, DePaepe, Reed, & Harrison, 1994).

What Are the School-Wide "Best Practices"?

Suggested best practices to be used in schools include (a) effective discipline practices, (b) positive attitudinal climate, and (c) community involvement. For effective discipline, a school needs a set of rules and guidelines about appropriate and inappropriate behavior that are consistent with society and the community. These rules/guidelines should be enforced consistently and be applicable to all students. Including student input when developing these rules and the disciplinary measures to enforce them makes them more appropriate and relevant for individual students.

Another school-wide best practice is an attitude of mutual respect among school administrators, teachers, staff, students, and families. School administrators and staff who accept individual differences and are sensitive to other cultures and religions create a positive attitude for all students. Schools that have after-school activities and events attractive to students and thier families (e.g., student organizations, band activities, creative arts) provide positive opportunities for students who may be at risk for problem behavior.

What Are the Classroom-Level "Best Practices"?

This chapter's group identified several teacher behaviors, student-skill strategies, and peer-intervention strategies that they felt represented classroom best practices.

As just noted, students should be actively involved in making decisions about classroom rules and the curriculum. The classroom should be structured and students rewarded for appropriate behaviors. Rewards for positive behavior should outnumber punishments for negative behaviors. Educators who implement best practices teach socialization and normalization skills, (i.e., appropriate social and behavioral skills rather than only academic skills). They foster skills that relate to success in the classroom setting, task-related behaviors, and critical "survival skills," and they use a variety of instructional approaches. When necessary, a major focus of the classroom should be teaching alternative behaviors and using alternative strategies (e.g., self-talk, self-management) that help students with behavioral disorders change their behavior.

The group suggested that positive teacher behaviors are crucial to students at risk for agressive behaviors. Teachers who "care" and are trained to deal with such behavior demonstrate best practices. Teachers who "connect" with students motivate them to respect their teachers and to reduce their inappropriate behaviors.

One additional classroom best practice that deserves consideration is mentoring either by adults or by the students themselves. Mentoring may involve a student working with one or more other students. Having the opportunity to "teach" other students helps the mentoring student develop a sense of purpose and self-esteem. Another approach to mentoring is using adults to mentor students in the classroom by providing recreational and/or vocational opportunities. This practice would integrate community members into the classroom.

What Will It Take to Make Schools Safe Again?

This chapter's group developed the following definition for a "safe school": A safe school is one where students, teachers, and staff are protected from violence and aggression. Protection should be a basic right within educational opportunities for all students (Morrison, Furlong, & Morrison, 1994).

There is general agreeement that a safe school encompasses several attributes. Among them are

- The school personnel possess positive attitudes and focus on positive events.
- Students, administrators, and staff develop a trusting environment.
- The school personnel and students share a sense of ownership of the school.
- Teachers and staff are motivated in their jobs and interested in the development of children.
- The community is made aware of school guidelines and curriculum.
- Students are taught appropriate social skills.
- Clear, concise, consistent rules/guidelines responsive to students and teachers are in place.
- The school building is located in an attractive setting and is well maintained.
- The community is an integral part of the school. Collaboration occurs with persons not directly working at the school such as families, law enforcement, corporations, clergy, social service agencies, juvenile justice systems, health services, and the like.
- The administration provides strong leadership, and the principals, school boards, and other administrators are highly visible and accessible both in the school and in the community.
- The school provides positive opportunities for students and organizations to meet such as peer groups within academic settings and for extracurricular activities.
- The school has an emergency backup plan when violent/aggressive acts occur.
- The consequences for violent/aggressive acts are administered consistently (e.g., no tolerance weapon rule; intruder announcement plan).
- Strategies for intervening upon an aggressive or violent crisis are outlined and all students and teachers are included in the development of that plan.
- The goals of the school are individualized to meet student and community needs (e.g., sensitive to cultural diversity). Stephens (1994) points out that a school may want to assess, survey, and organize a school-community program in order to develop goals appropriate and specific to the community.
- All teachers and staff receive training in working with aggressive and violent students (Soriano, Soraino, & Jimenez 1994). As Morrison et al. (1994) and Furlong and Morrison (1994) have asserted, school safety is not simply the "absence of violence in the school" but reflects the climate of the school and includes the personal attitudes of staff, the physical environment, and atmosphere of the school.

Conclusion

The group whose ideas are summarized in this chapter was comprised of 13 practitioners from a variety of geographic locations including Florida, Georgia, Wisconsin, and Mississippi. Professionally, the group contained practitioners from the public schools, Head Start, law enforcement, and psychological services. The views expressed here are not necessarily based on available research; some are a reflection of what these professionals working in the field have witnessed.

This group felt the most pressing issue is the tremendous need for professionals representing various disciplines to collaborate when working with students who are aggressive and/or violent. The opportunity for educators and community representatives to meet and discuss the issues and problem solve solutions is critical. From these collaborative efforts may come the positive approaches needed to meet the growing challenge of agression in the schools.

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An Education Imperiled: The Challenge of Aggressive and Violent Behavior in the Schools

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The Growing Challenge of Aggression and Violence in the Schools

The steady rise in children's antisocial, acting-out, and aggressive behavior poses a formidable challenge to various social institutions, especially our public schools (Dumas, Blechman, & Prinz, 1992; Furlong & Morrison, 1994). Across the country, administrators and teachers struggle with the mounting problem of aggression, as many within the educational community see our schools as unsafe. Not surprisingly, there is a general consensus supporting immediate action to stem the rise in aggression, the magnitude of which threatens to undermine the structure and quality of public education (Gable, Bullock, & Harader, in press).

Because figures are limited and sometimes contradictory, it is difficult to know the precise level of violence in today's schools (cf. Furlong, Morrison, & Dear, 1994; Stephens, 1994). Research does substantiate (a) children are becoming involved in aggressive acts at an earlier age (Miller, 1994), (b) violent behavior often is triggered by incidents as trivial as a wrongful look (Olweus, 1991), and (c) each episode increases the chance that a weapon will be used (Miller, 1994). Other studies indicate that acts of aggression likely are multiplicative rather than cumulative in nature—one aggressive act begets another, usually of an increasingly more serious nature (Patterson, 1992). In all, the amount of aggression and violence that surrounds and invades the schools is of growing concern to teachers, parents, and students alike (James, in press; Stephens, 1994).

In the succeeding discussion, we draw upon available literature and the opinions of participants in the February 1995 Forum on Working with Children and Youth Who Have Aggressive and Violent Behaviors to explore various sides of the problem of aggression and violence in the schools. The chapter covers

1. Major factors associated with antisocial, acting-out, and aggressive behavior.
2. Strategies to combat student aggression and to encourage schools to reject episodic, one-dimensional solutions that fail to adequately address the problem.
3. The value of conceptualizing aggression as being proactive or reactive in nature—two distinct pathways that may lead schools to separate program options.
4. Possible steps schools can take to institute district-wide programs to combat aggression.

Origins of Children's Aggression

According to the literature, there is no single explanation for why some children develop aggressive behavior (Arllen, Gable, Kauffman, & Lloyd, 1992; Leone, 1990). While experts believe aggression is largely a learned behavior, both constitutional and environmental factors play a part (e.g., Landy & Peters, 1992). For example, a child's temperament can

interact with that of the primary caregivers in a reciprocal fashion to generate antagonistic behavior. From the first exchanges, some children evoke negative adult responses that can lead to harsh, inconsistent discipline and even parental rejection (Landy & Peters, 1992). Other familial-environmental correlations of aggression include substance abuse, spouse abuse, victimization, severe depression, psychopathology, family criminality, poverty-related stress, and exposure to media violence (Gable, 1994). In and around the home, the imitation of malevolent behavior, weighted according to its reinforcement, can contribute to a stable pattern of aggressive behavior before a youngster begins school (Olweus, 1980; Patterson, 1992).

Aggression in the School

A number of school-related factors contribute to a further rise in aggressive behavior. For instance, Kazdin (1991) identified teacher failure to acknowledge completion of school work, lack of emphasis on individual student responsibility, inconsistent classroom expectations, low emphasis on academics, and insufficient teacher praise. Similarly, Gable, McConnell, and Nelson (1986) reported that inferior instruction, inappropriate curricular placement, and lack of consistent discipline can spawn student misbehavior. In addition, aversive instructional activities or faulty teacher-pupil interactions can inspire acting-out behavior (e.g., Gunter, Denny, Jack, Shores, & Nelson, 1993). Taken together, these and related biological/constitutional and child-rearing factors underscore the complex and multicausal nature of children's aggression.

Strategies to Combat Aggression and Violence in the Schools

Until recently, most school systems viewed the problem of violence and aggression as belonging primarily to the criminal justice system, not a concern for which they shared responsibility (Morrison, Furlong, & Morrison, 1994). Today's reality has changed that perception. A sense of urgency has created a demand for more information about ways to address the complex issues that foment and surround the escalating violence in the schools (Morrison et al., 1994). Some of that information can be found in recent reports on school violence. For example, according to the National Research Council (1993), school-based factors that relate to an escalation in school violence include (a) inadequate building design; (b) relatively large numbers of students in small spaces; (c) a limited capacity to avoid confrontation; and (d) routines and demands for conformity that contribute to feelings of anger, resentment, and rejection among students. Unfortunately, many school divisions are burdened with inadequate educational facilities—buildings that are overcrowded and in disrepair. And reduced education funds impose severe restrictions on available options.

School officials are taking steps to combat other sources of aggression; however, many are discovering that programs designed simply to suppress aggression but which fail to offer students replacement options may be misguided (Gable et al., in press). Sentiment is growing that the school governance should not become too authoritarian lest educators exacerbate an already difficult situation (e.g., Miller, 1994). Indeed, establishing "safe schools" goes beyond merely instituting more powerful behavior management systems with which to respond to bouts of assaultive behavior. Authorities agree that it is not enough to respond to random acts of student aggression, without giving consideration to the various reasons behind student aggression.

Pathways to School Aggression

Because different children can take different pathways to aggression (as illustrated in Table 1), the mechanisms that motivate and sustain aggression are not necessarily the same for every student (Larson, 1994; Wehby, 1994). Dodge (1991) and Feindler, Marriott, and Iwata (1984)—among others—assert that aggressive behavior comes in multiple forms and with different origins, behavioral characteristics, and functions. According to Dodge, two principal types—proactive and reactive—are distinct but not mutually exclusive sides of aggression. Children with proactive aggression are troubling to others, because they use violent acts to achieve a desired outcome (e.g., bullying others into complying with their demands). On the other hand, youngsters who exhibit reactive aggression seem to be more troubled by others, with a propensity to react defensively to behavior they read as hostile (e.g., they do not instigate but cannot avoid confrontation with peers).

Education personnel recognize that numerous strategies can be introduced to deal with student aggression, but the results are likely to be more effective if programs are linked to specific problem situations (e.g., Dodge, 1991). Varying goals may necessitate overlapping as well as separate treatment approaches. Although only in a formative stage, conceptualizing aggression as being proactive or reactive holds promise in trying to establish group-individualized programs of intervention/prevention. However, given the modest database to support the bulk of current practices, it is essential that schools evaluate the impact of their effects (e.g., Larson, 1994). [For more discussion on types of aggression, readers are referred to Van Acker's chapter in this volume.]

As Gottfredson, Gottfredson, and Hybl (1993) point out, school-wide and classroom-level programs are essential to improve student conduct. At the classroom level, teachers are seeking to provide (a) clarity

TABLE 1
Possible Pathways to Student Aggression

Types of Aggression	
Proactive Aggression	Reactive Aggression
Chacteristic Behavior	
• Verbal/physical threats	• Person-directed hostility
• Dominance/bullying	• Tantrums, out-of-control behavior
• Nondefensive physical aggression	• Defensive acts of physical aggression
• Stealing	
Possible Origin	
• Instrumental behavior learned as means to obtain desired outcome	• Retaliatory behavior stemming from anger and strong emotion
• Product of a "coercive rut" or negative parent/child interactions	• Triggered by "perceptual errors," hostile intent attributed to other's behavior
• Chronic pattern of confrontiveness	• Self-reinforcing
Viable Intervention Options	
• Self-control training	• Anger management
• Social problem solving	• Anger-control training
• Environmental engineering	• Social role taking
• Response cost/timeout	• Social skills training

of rules and expectations, (b) high rates of teacher praise, (c) meaningful instruction, (d) sensitivity to cultural and ethnic differences, and (e) pupil-specific interventions. At the same time, it is essential to avoid power struggles and the use of punitive control measures (e.g., Rutherford & Nelson, in press).

What It Will Take to Make Schools Safe Again

As mentioned earlier, student aggression has both environmental and individual determinants. Accordingly, school officials must gain a better understanding of the environmental conditions that set the occasion for aggressive behavior (e.g., overcrowded classrooms or schools) as well as knowledge of student-specific factors (e.g., need to dominate or bully peers). Indeed, future development of programs of short-term intervention and long-term prevention may begin with attempts to distinguish among various types of aggression and violence.

Another step in fighting aggression is to develop a comprehensive plan based on input from a variety of stakeholders such as the school superintendent, parents, teachers, juvenile authorities, social service workers, and students (e.g., Stephens, 1994). For this process to succeed, it must be undergirded by an agreement among participants to deemphasize blame and to work cooperatively to seek lasting solutions (Furlong et al., 1994). At the same time, it is crucial that officials conduct an initial assessment (e.g., teacher and student surveys and school-climate study) to identify major areas of need (i.e., missing safe-school components). Later, a functional assessment of contextual factors that relate to aggression can help to determine likely effective strategies and programs (Gable, 1994; Stephens, 1994). [For a more complete discussion of assessing and implementing a school plan see The Mini-Series on School Violence in *School Psychology Review*, Volume 23(2), 1994.]

Today, school administrators also are looking for ways to neutralize problem situations before they arise by recognizing cross-cultural student values, involving students in the governance of their schools, establishing student disciplinary councils, and restructuring extracurricular events (e.g., Gable, 1994; Van Acker, 1993). These efforts are aimed at encour-

aging positive student attachments to social and organizational structures within the school.

In sum, school systems are introducing district-wide, violence-prevention programs that place emphasis on both the means to eliminate student aggression and the environmental sources of that aggression while vigorously promoting self-control, anger management, conflict resolution, and age-appropriate prosocial behavior. Innovative, multitier, building-level programs of prevention/intervention are being initiated (a) on a school-wide basis, (b) with high-risk subgroups of students, and (c) that target acting-out, aggressive students. Programs differ according to intrusiveness, complexity, and duration, all of which are influenced by the seriousness of the problem. Some programs are in cooperation with various community agencies (see Gable et al., in press; Guetzloe, 1992). As professionals and the lay community together attempt to combat aggression in the schools, emerging partnerships can include educators, mental-health workers, court officials, and family members.

Summary

Based on group discussion and the accumulated literature, this group of forum participants suggested some options and activities to make schools safe again:

- Act early—before aggression takes hold.
- Apply effective consequences that stop antisocial and aggressive behavior.
- Teach nonaggressive, age-appropriate behavior to all students, as an integral part of daily instruction.
- Allow students to play a role in seeking solutions to the problems surrounding school violence.
- Develop transdisciplinary programs that are multicomponent in nature and that emphasize student communication, problem solving, self-control, conflict resolution, and social skills.
- Develop intervention/prevention programs that can be applied selectively to change target behavior(s) of single/multiple students.
- Place more emphasize on longitudinal program options.
- Develop programs that offer periodic "booster" treatment and plan to do so across the life span of some students.
- Cast significant persons from the larger community in the role of behavior change agents.
- Develop more flexible educational options that vary according to intrusiveness and behavioral control and allow students to move within and across programs and program settings.

As Kauffman (1994) asserts, if educational institutions are to rid themselves of the peril of violence, "we cannot afford to delay effective action any longer" (p. 8). The complex nature of aggression—problems of social cognition and social skills, language, behavior control, and discrimination, as well as those that stem from a student's environment—demand comprehensive programs of sustained intervention (Gable, 1994).

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Voices on Violence: Concern and First Consensus

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As part of a forum sponsored by the Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders, a broad cross-section of the professional community concerned with the increasing aggression and violence in today's schools and communities recently wrestled not only with the problem itself, but also with the diverse perspectives brought by different individuals. At the first level of analysis, consensus that a serious and disturbing problem exists was more easily attained than consensus on specific actions and priorities. Bridging the differences in professional roles, finding a common language, and searching for a collaborative model for communication and joint action were quickly perceived as the most urgent tasks by the participants in the discussion group whose ideas and opinions are summarized in this chapter.

Our group consisted of 20 professionals from Washington, Idaho, Oregon, Mississippi, Minnesota, and California. They represented law enforcement, special education for incarcerated delinquents, social work, residential facilities and other child or family agencies, university training and research, and public school special education. Over a 2-day period, a general consensus was reached on the major factors contributing to increased levels of aggression and violence and on ways these 20 professionals, and the diverse agencies they represented, could cope. However, many questions were left unanswered.

The Growing Challenge of Aggression and Violence in the Schools

What is known about the major factors that contribute to increases in aggression? There are many beliefs, opinions, and testimonials, but this group agreed that there is much that is still not known (Sautter, 1995; Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Despite the fact that each individual displaying aggressive or violent behavior is different and requires an individually tailored response, this group agreed that too much time and resources are wasted reinventing some basic "wheels."

There was also agreement that media portrayals of violence tend to desensitize viewers over time. One consequence may be that people suffer and stoically endure a spiraling increase, both in frequency and intensity, of aversive behaviors. Gradually, a sense of normalcy is lost and is replaced by a dangerous and paralyzing relativism.

The group described socializing and civilizing rituals, many embedded in the everyday life of families, as lost, broken, or vulnerable. Meanwhile, gang culture, perhaps as a replacement for a more coherent family and community culture, has spread rapidly while becoming increasingly violent and territorial (Fitzsimons, 1994). Not only are adult presence, guidance, authority, and moral example threatened in many families and communities, but so too are simpler, but still important, social rituals like living and eating together in a stable, physical environment; participating in religious activities together; and attending school and community functions. Many communities lack and fail to invest in productive work or other positive after-school recreational or learning opportunities for youth. The social disintegration represented by such losses cannot be remedied by teachers and schools alone.

What are the most critical issues relating to the rise of aggression in schools? The group felt strongly that parents often resist both home- and center-based family interventions for children and youth with behavior problems at school. In some areas, an alarmingly large number of parents did not complete school or did

not enjoy their school careers themselves. Therefore, they are often intimidated and do not know how to deal with schools when their own children develop problems.

For their part, school boards, administrators, and teachers may resist adopting or integrating a "peace" curriculum because it raises many difficult fiscal or even political questions. It remains unclear whether greater benefits could be derived from a broad-spectrum general curriculum or from interventions highly targeted to offenders or those at high risk for becoming offenders (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

More critically, the group felt that regular teachers, as well as paraprofessionals, are not adequately trained either to manage aggression or to teach peaceful conflict resolution. Inflexibilities and limitations of teachers and school environments can often be as problematic as the actual behavior of students. Teachers vary greatly in their tolerance for inappropriate behavior, in their perceptions of the ultimate seriousness of some behavior, and in their skills in managing disturbing behavior (Gerber, 1994). Behavior management approaches fail or are ineffective for many students with severe behavior disorders due to poor implementation.

Too, the school system invites failure by allowing teachers to feel isolated and unsupported. Even teachers with adequate training begin to feel inadequate and overwhelmed by the size of their caseloads or the sheer enormity of the problems they perceive (Fitzsimons, 1994). Moreover, teachers who are very effective with students with severe behavior disorders are "rewarded" by being given responsibility for even greater numbers of sudents with problem behavior. Thus, a school culture of avoidance develops, one that tends to "pass the buck" so that ever more serious behavior problems are shunted to ever fewer professionals and agencies. Also characteristic of this culture is the fact that blaming occurs, both within and beyond the schools. High schools blame middle schools. Middle schools blame elementary schools. Elementary schools blame preschools or families, and families blame the schools.

This group felt that, in part, a "blaming" or "buck-passing" culture results from schools that are simply too large to create or replace the necessary sense of school-community. Schools are also too administratively complex to sufficiently provide for individual needs and differences, or to provide adequate opportunities for children and youth to participate in positive, diverting extracurricular activities. In fact, some schools may need to scale back significantly to "re-communalize" the families and neighborhoods they serve. Although such reductions in scale may have a negative economic consequence, this chapter's group believes that new technologies should help to offset any loss by distributing access to information resources and making such access faster and cheaper for small schools. In discussions, the group noted that many authorities recommend similar reductions in scale—suggesting, for example, that high school enrollment should not exceed 2,000 students.

To accomplish this systemic reform, though, a significant degree of local control must be exercised at a time when local control of schools may be increasingly illusory. Sometimes, state and federal requirements and controls are so constraining that only narrow local initiatives seem possible. On the other hand, some elements of national curriculum, with implementation left wholly to local districts, may facilitate professional communication, create fewer variable standards, and provide parents and children with some consistency of expectations.

Conversely, standardization invites mismatch, especially cultural mismatch, with local communities and their multicultural citizenry. Yet despite a need to exhibit sensitivity to these multicultural constituencies, this group believes that all parents want their children to be safe at school and do not want their children to be the cause of harm to others. These same goals may be achieved through slightly different pathways by different cultural groups in different communities, but they do form a preliminary opportunity for rebuilding a lost consensus about today's schools.

Unfortunately, communities may take this opportunity to form a different, far more negative consensus. For example, in discussing policies of "zero tolerance," this group recognized that these policies make for good press, but they tragically fail to recover the children and youth against whom they are directed. After all, where do individuals rejected because of zero-tolerance policies go? Already, law enforcement agencies are being pressured into earlier and more severe intervention with young offenders even though they are far less equipped compared than schools and mental health agencies to either divert or reeducate children and youth who are aggressive or violent. From a psychosocial perspective, aggression "works" for kids who use it. That ought to be as much the focus of attention as is work to eliminate from the system those children who exhibit aggressive behavior.

Again though, policies such as zero tolerance are consistent with the historical tendency for schools and communities to choose to suppress noxious and undesirable behaviors rather than to replace them. People more frequently and more readily choose to be punitive despite evidence that punishment is difficult to administer effectively and may have an effect that is the exact opposite to that intended (Gerber, 1994). Nevertheless, it seems true that citizens aroused by lurid reports of violence do tend to vote for jails more readily than for spending money on programs of intervention or reeducation. Other citizens may simply feel they are immune from the prob-

lem and, therefore, remain politically inactive. Many middle and upper class citizens, for example, erroneously believe that they are removed or insulated from serious and violent crime, that these are problems in someone else's neighborhood. It is also true that these middle and upper classes can and do invest their own resources to prevent, treat, and remediate behaviors tending toward aggression and violence—an alternative not available to families of lower income. People need to realize that the problems of aggression and violence belong to the whole society, collectively, and that prison-building campaigns, or other such "tough on crime" measures, will not themselves provide the protection and deterrence the public wants and expects. Some other approach is needed, and a significant portion of that approach must be educational (Kauffman, 1994).

Beyond formal policies, social and community standards and expectations are not clearly communicated to our children. It is common for children to receive inconsistent messages about appropriate behavior. Society is, therefore, at risk of losing a broad cultural consensus about children's behavior and whose responsibility it is to teach, shape, and control that behavior.

Society may, in fact, be losing a broader idea of "community" altogether. For example, in large districts where bussing is common, parents and students have little connection to or investment in schools that are located well beyond their immediate neighborhoods. In highly violent urban neighborhoods, those who can move do so, and those who cannot retreat to their homes, leaving the streets and neighborhoods to perpetrators. In fact, violent competition is so severe, even gangs move, or else students recreate gang culture when they individually move as a way of gaining a sense of control in new and unfamiliar environments.

What goals does society hold for short-term intervention and long-term prevention of aggression? Individuals who are professionally and personally committed to eliminating violence by and against children must convince schools that the cost of not focusing direct and intensive effort on problems of aggression and violence is much higher than the apparent cost of altering or adding to the curriculum and instructional practices of our schools.

Professionals must help communities realize the dimensions of the problems schools face and the avenues of solution that exist (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Otherwise, communities are victims of media hype (Fitzsimons, 1994; Sautter, 1995). Powerful images of one person, one situation episodes of violence distort the real problem and distract public attention from the more chronic issues and underlying problems of learned aggression (Gerber, 1994; Kauffman, 1994). It is possible that more children fear being bullied on a daily basis than fear being shot. Left unaddressed, the former may lead to and facilitate the latter. More community-wide education, greater attention to the need for greater perspective, and more communication between and among community constituencies are absolutely essential. Continuing efforts are also needed to persuade the media to reflect a truer picture of aggression and violence in the schools as well as to present the potentially successful efforts professionals are making to manage and control these problems.

Unfortunately, professionals are often isolated from each other. Communities need formal, permanent venues in which professionals from different orientations and agencies can interact and plan coordinated efforts over a sustained period of time. One facilitating innovation may be to locate comprehensive services at the school rather than scattered around the community. However, schools should stop trying to be the answer for everything. By attempting to play that role, schools may inadvertently deprive parents and other community members of active roles or motivation to create such roles. Likewise, professionals may take too much responsibility upon themselves. Ultimately, they are the agents of a community but cannot replace the community itself.

Strategies to Combat Aggression and Violence in the Schools

What is "wrong" with the schools? What options exist for school-wide best practices? What options exist for classroom-level best practices? What other treatment issues are significant?

This chapter's group recommends an overt curriculum aimed at teaching nonaggressive and nonviolent methods of conflict resolution and, relatedly, the need for family interventions. In conjunction with other school efforts, support groups for parents and families of troubled children and youth could be established that may be effective in terms of both costs and results.

Professionals must insist that all new and continuing programs are subjected to critical, searching, and objective monitoring and evaluations. Results must be published for the community's deliberation and use. By this means and through continued research, more knowledge about organizing systemic solutions could be generated than now exists (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

The major strategy that the group discussed, one that addresses both classroom and school-level improvements, concerned professional training and support. Specifically, teacher training must be reassessed. Professional training standards, licensing, and continuing career education requirements need to be reviewed. Basic training of teachers, for example, is often followed by an abandonment that passes for professional induction. This wastes valuable people and

scarce resources. Continuing education is important because it brings more and better knowledge to the point of practice, closer to where children and youth manifest problems. Also, although broad knowledge is shared across geographical and professional boundaries, much practical expertise is developed locally, in response to specific problems in particular contexts. Thus, systems for supporting these practitioners are of paramount importance.

Expert communication skills, founded on specific training, are of critical importance to develop the kind of skilled practitioners needed. In this group's view, mental health professionals, and other human service workers, often possess better communication skills necessary to work with behavioral disordered individuals. These professionals seem to understand and respond more effectively to the specific kinds of behaviors that disturb, annoy, or anger teachers. If this perceived difference is real, it is due partly to the differences in training experienced by each professional. However, it may also reflect important differences in the work environment of these professionals.

For example, it is important to understand that teachers vary in ability, just as students do (Gerber, 1994). All teachers eventually confront limiting "barriers" of time, energy, and motivation as well as barriers related to lack of specific skills. Communities should recognize that most teachers care deeply about problems of aggression and violence and deserve to be reinforced, socially as well as financially, for the considerable effort they make to deal with these problems. However, given the fact that variations and limitations in teachers and the contexts in which they work will unavoidably exist, it is critical that teachers learn to work "smarter" and not necessarily "harder."

Regular, as well as special education, teachers must be taught to see violent behavior as the end of a continuum of resistive, noncompliant, and aggressive behaviors (Gerber, 1994). Dealing with emotional and behavioral disorders must be seen as part of every teacher's training and responsibility. Teachers also need to be able to (a) discriminate between lack of skills and motivation and lack of ability and (b) address both whenever they are underlying cause of aggressive behavior.

To these ends, teachers need more support, and more rewards for the good efforts they make. They must have mentors who can model strategies, not simply explain them. Schools need more resource teachers who "float" to better meet the unpredictable rise and fall of demand for extra, expert help. A colleague with specific and appropriate training should be available to help teachers when personal or personality conflicts emerge between them and students. A "no-fault" mediation process should exist to protect both the authority and integrity of the teacher without demeaning or diminishing the student.

Finally, the requirements for teacher credentials and licenses vary too much across states. Some states create an incentive for teachers to prepare in the serious emotional disturbances (SED) area—something that all states should do. The business community should promote and provide incentives for the best people to train to work with SED children and youth.

These perceptions of need and possible responses do not constitute the only solution. While much discussion is focused on finding a comprehensive—or "magic"—solution, this chapter's group felt that the enormity of the problem would preclude the finding of any such solution. Rather, such a complex problem demands that each individual figure out how the part he or she may play is related to the whole. Also, a "menu" of options to fit different situations in different environments for different people is needed. However, efforts cannot be piecemeal. As one participant commented, "If you add a spoonful of wine to a barrel of sewage, you've still got sewage."

What It Will Take to Make Schools Safe Again

Beyond the core and joint issues of training and support for teachers, what options exist for district-wide best practices? The group rejected, as just stated, the idea of a single, comprehensive solution. They did see merit in attempts to re-communalize schools by reducing their size, extending the use of technology, and enhance training and support for teachers working with aggressive students. The district policies that best support these changes will vary from one district to another, but the purpose of change is more important than the structure or configuration that individual districts choose to implement.

What roles and functions should be assumed by school and nonschool personnel? A formal means by which professionals and their agencies can regularly meet, cross-educate, and coordinate their actions is needed. Further, to facilitate this cooperation and exploration of roles and contributions, the group recommended experimentation with and expansion of full-service or multiservice schools to serve not only as the focus of child and community educational programs, but also as the locus of a range of child and family support services. The physical juxtaposition of various agencies would bring professionals into a natural and more integrated working relationship. This arrangement would enhance coordination and comprehensiveness in addressing the serious problems of aggression and violence.

What is the future of aggression and violence in the schools? In discussing these issues over 2 days, the group became increasingly aware that society is at the beginning of a long process of social, as well as professional, change. Many voices have raised concern, and even urgent alarm, but consensus is lack-

ing on which actions are necessary and how to prioritize them. On the other hand, it was clear that consensus building on these issues would require sustained contact with each other and, more generally, sustained exchange among the various agencies and professional constituencies the group represented. Consensus will not occur without combined and coordinated effort by these agencies and professional organizations. The group parted, persuaded of the seriousness of the problems; aware of the likely avenues of address, if not solution; and with the sincere hope that they had contributed if not to momentum toward solutions, then to an end to inertia.

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Strategies to Reduce School Aggression and Violence

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Violence is prevalent throughout society as evidenced by cross-national and historical data (Tolan & Guerra, 1994). Aggressive and violent behavior exhibited by children and youth is a problem rampant in today's schools, ranging from acts of defiance and noncompliance to weapons violations and assaults. Such behaviors negatively impact student achievement while creating fear and insecurity on the part of both students and school personnel. Contributing factors are varied. Remediative strategies must be inclusive of the parents and their communities as well as the students and the school.

The Growing Challenge of Aggression and Violence in the Schools

Aggressive and violent behaviors often have their causation in factors outside the school. Today children are exposed to multiple forms of violence. From an early age, they are able to view aggressive and violent acts through television, videotapes, and movies. Also, a great deal of modern music is suggestive of such behavior. In the home, children are left more and more to their own devices in dealing with everyday problems. Some see aggression and violent acts carried out in their own homes and neighborhoods. As a result of some or all of these factors, more and more children lack the social skills required to appropriately deal with confrontational and other interpersonal situations. Family economics is also related to the rise of aggressive and violent behaviors while a general lack of parental support often contributes to the perpetuation of the problem.

Empirically identified risk factors for serious antisocial behavior include individual-level characteristics (e.g., impaired cognitive functioning and low academic achievement, poor peer-relations skills, and biases and deficits in cognitive processing); family-functioning factors (e.g., poor parental management methods, low emotional cohesion, and inadequate family problem-solving and coping skills); and peer influences (e.g., association with deviant peers). In addition, there appear to be community and societal influences that are mediated through family characteristics or affect the likelihood of individual, family, and peer influences leading to violence (Tolan & Guerra, 1994).

In the schools, conditions that can create an environment conducive to aggressive and violent behavior include overcrowding; irritating noise; boredom; unsocialized members of the group; rewards for aggressive behavior; and unskilled, too few, or easily intimidated staff (Guetzloe, 1995).

Strategies to Combat Aggression and Violence in Schools

Schools often are expected by parents and by society to deal with the problem of aggressive and violent behaviors in an isolated fashion. Yet such behavior is caused by a myriad of factors.

More and more, schools are forced to enroll students who, at early ages, are not ready for school academically and who have not been taught appropriate social skills in their home and community environments. Traditional lock-step grade-level hierarchies trap students into curriculums that are either too advanced, too low, or not meaningful for the student, leading to boredom and frustration which exacerbate the possibility of aggressive behaviors in the classrooms. Very often, teachers and other school personnel lack the training required to deal with students who exhibit aggressive and violent behaviors. Schools often lack the resources to provide additional support personnel such as counselors and psychologists to work with students exhibiting aberrant behaviors.

Schools must make certain reforms in order to better deal with aggressive and violent behaviors in the classroom and on the campus. Educators must adopt the philosophy that this problem is insidious and one that the schools must deal with—aggressive and violent behaviors are not someone else's problem, no matter what the causes. Some steps schools can take to increase their success in dealing with violent and aggressive behaviors include

- Teachers and other school personnel must have adequate training in the prevention and remediation as well as the daily handling of such behaviors.
- Behavior management techniques must be taught and reinforced by all school personnel.
- The school must have a strong discipline and management plan that is consistently enforced by the staff and administration.
- School personnel must be trained in the early identification of problematic behaviors that may lead to the rise of aggressive and violent behaviors.
- Schools must provide meaningful learning environments and relevant curriculums in which the majority of the students can experience success.
- Students must be placed in appropriate academic levels in order to experience academic success. The multiage classroom is one means by which appropriate academic placement may be accomplished.
- Schools must provide support teams such as counselors, psychologists, and social workers to assist classroom personnel with the identification, assessment, and remediation of aggressive and violent behaviors.
- Appropriate social skills and character education curriculums must be implemented in the schools. The teaching of situational behaviors, alternative behaviors, problem-solving skills, conflict management, and critical-thinking skills is essential as schools deal with the problem.
- Multicultural infusion and the teaching of tolerance and respect for diversity should be an integral part of the curriculum.
- Schools must adopt an inclusionary philosophy as it relates to serving students with various disabilities, including those students with behavioral disorders and/or emotional disturbances.
- Parents must be involved in both the prevention and the consequences of aggressive and violent behaviors. Parental education is one means of assisting parents in teaching their children appropriate behaviors. Parents must be part of the discipline process on the campus when inappropriate behaviors occur.
- As part of the continuum of possible interventions, medical and psychiatric strategies must be a consideration for children who exhibit particularly dangerous and/or disruptive behaviors and with whom other less intrusive strategies have failed to be effective. However, the use of medication and other more extreme strategies such as residential or psychiatric placements, particularly with young children, should be considered most prudently and only after other strategies have been exhausted.

What It Will Take to Make Schools Safe Again

Schools are reflective of and must react to a number of societal influences. Social forces such as prejudice, economic inequality, and attitudes toward violence in the mainstream American culture interact with the influences of early childhood to foster the expression of violence. When children and youth come into contact with certain social experiences, their risk of involvement with violence increases. The experiences include access to firearms; involvement with alcohol and other drugs; involvement in antisocial groups, including delinquent gangs and violent mobs; and exposure to violence in the mass media. It is important to stress, however, that no specific social experience inevitably leads to violence. The degree of risk is strongly influenced by what the child or youth previously learned about violence and aggression (American Psychological Association, 1993).

It is important that school campuses become havens where the risk of exposure to such experiences is minimal, while equipping students with the cognitive skills necessary to handle such experiences without resorting to violence or aggressions when students do confront them. This endeavor will encompass more than placing metal detectors at the school doors. Other necessary steps include

- To mount a multifaceted approach to the problem, interagency collaboration between school districts, schools, police, judicial systems, juvenile systems, and social services must be developed. The juvenile system itself must be refined in order to more heavily punish serious youthful offenders. To do this, the judiciary must have more power to impose stiffer penalties on the offenders. This refinement should include tangible, monetary accountability for parents of underage offenders. Legislation that restricts access to firearms and imposes heavy penalties for violators is another necessary component of reform.
- Efforts must be made to make the mass media accountable for the types and frequency of

programming that reinforces vigilante, aggressive, and violent acts to young audiences.

- School districts must empower local campuses to create innovative programs to deal with factors unique to their communities. This empowerment includes the allocation and reallocation of funding to employ personnel, such as social and psychological service providers, to deal with campus and community problems.
- Schools must implement early education programs to help parents ensure that their children are ready for school and that appropriate behaviors have been taught. Parents have to be taught to limit children's exposure from an early age to violent and aggressive behaviors in the media.
- Schools must provide meaningful curriculums and a wide variety of cocurricular and extracurricular activities that encourage the positive engagement of the majority of the students. Strong school-based and community-based gang and drug intervention and education programs must be implemented for those youth already committed to that lifestyle.

Conclusion

The problem of aggression and violence in the school is caused by both nonschool and school-based factors. Therefore, the solutions are complicated. A broad-based approach is needed that includes not only school and school district personnel but also police officials, judges, social service providers, and community education agencies.

No one strategy will work for every child, family, or school campus. By using a broad-based approach, school campuses can implement a variety of strategies that will enable school personnel to react effectively to violent and aggressive behaviors while providing programming of a preventive nature. Given the restrictive nature of today's school budgets, broad-based, interagency collaboration is the only way to establish effective programming.

The school campus that effectively deals with and, in fact, is able to prevent the rise of aggressive and violent behaviors is one that has

- A strong curriculum delivered in a fashion that promotes student success.
- Early childhood education and intervention programs and strategies.
- A strong classroom and campus discipline management plan.
- On-campus support personnel (or access to off-campus personnel) such as psychologists and social workers.
- A strong social skills curriculum (including tolerance training).
- A strong parent education component.
- A strong community and community services network.
- Established (nonviolent) strategies to deal with the occurrence of aggressive and violent acts.

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Teacher-Mediated Interventions for Reducing Classroom Aggression

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The Growing Challenge of Aggression and Violence in the Schools

By all accounts, aggressive and violent behavior is increasing among children and youth in America's schools. While most young people occasionally exhibit aggressive behavior in the course of their normal development, an alarming increase is taking place in the number of youth who confront their parents, teachers, and peers with persistent threatening and destructive behaviors. These overt and extreme forms of aggressive behavior involve acts directed against persons and include verbal or physical assault, oppositional-defiant behavior, use of coercive tactics, and humiliation of others (Walker, 1993).

Aggression, from a social learning perspective, is defined as gestural, verbal, and physical behaviors that result in physical, material, or psychological pain or injury to another person. According to the literature, younger aggressive students exhibit such behaviors as humiliating, biting, being destructive, whining, yelling, teasing, being noncompliant, and being negative (Patterson, Ray, Shaw, & Cobb, 1969). A defining characteristic of older aggressive students is the persistence of these behavior patterns over time. While most children significantly decrease their aggressive behavior as they mature, aggressive children maintain a consistently high rate of aggressiveness as they grow older.

Across time, the aggressive student's social environment greatly influences the level and intensity of his or her aggression in the school and classroom. Social learning may be the most important determinant of both aggressive and prosocial behavior. According to Bandura (1973), aggression is learned through the observation of aggression and its consequences and through experiencing the direct consequences of aggressive and prosocial behaviors.

Kerr and Nelson (1989) have suggested three functional explanations of classroom aggression. First, the aggressive behavior may be under inappropriate stimulus control. While some forms of hurtful behavior may be appropriate under certain circumstances (e.g., self-defense, with mutual consent, to protect others), the aggressive student may exhibit these behaviors in situations that do not warrant aggression. This student may lack the ability to discriminate the environmental cues or prompts which set the occasion for prosocial rather than aggressive behaviors. A second explanation of aggression is that these behaviors have been, and continue to be, reinforced by tangible reward or personal gain; by the reaction of others; or by the avoidance of aversive, undesired, or unpleasant situations or consequences. A third explanation is that aggressive behavior may be imitated. If the aggressive student is a member of a group that values aggression and toughness, he or she may imitate aggressive behavior exhibited by peers or other high status models.

Thus, from a social learning perspective, student aggression may occur as a result of a complex interaction of three factors: inappropriate or ineffective stimulus control, direct or indirect reinforcement of aggression, and modeling of aggression. This perspective leads logically to the assumption that aggressive behaviors are learned and that incompatible, prosocial skills can likewise be taught (Bandura, 1971).

In this chapter, research evidence and current practice regarding teacher-mediated interventions with students exhibiting aggressive behavior in the schools is reviewed. The ideas and concepts from one ~~group of participants~~ in the CCBD Working Forum on Aggressive and Violent Behaviors are also in-

cluded. For this group's purposes, aggression was defined in terms of its social learning or functional relationship to antecedent and consequent events in the classroom and school. Teacher-mediated interventions were discussed as effective strategies for preventing or reducing student aggression and teaching prosocial skills as replacement behaviors for aggressive and violent behaviors.

Strategies to Combat Aggression and Violence in the Schools: Use of Teacher-Mediated Interventions

Two broad categories of intervention enable teachers to manage student aggression:

- The rearrangement of behavior management contingencies and behavior-reduction contingencies to manage aggressive behaviors.
- The teaching of appropriate prosocial skills that are incompatible with aggressive behaviors.

This chapter focuses on behavioral interventions derived from applied behavior analysis (Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968) and social learning theory. These models emphasize the use of overt, objectively observable behaviors as dependent measures. Behavioral interventions can take one of two forms—procedures designed for behavior enhancement and procedures designed for behavior reduction (Nelson & Rutherford, 1988).

Behavior-Enhancement Contingencies

Six behavior-enhancement procedures have been documented in the applied behavior analysis literature as effective with aggressive behavior in the classroom and school. These procedures, which are often most effective when combined with behavior-reduction procedures, include tangible reinforcement, activity reinforcement, token reinforcement, modeling, behavioral contracting, and social reinforcement.

Tangible reinforcement. Tangible or material reinforcers are desirable goods or objects presented to students contingent upon desired behaviors. Although they frequently are used as backup reinforcers in token economies, they also may be delivered immediately following prosocial behaviors. Rhode, Jenson, and Reavis (1993) suggest that tangible rewards tend to be more effective with younger children who may not initially respond consistently to teachers' social reinforcement.

Activity reinforcement. Activity reinforcers are those events the student, given an array of different activities, chooses to engage in. The opportunity to engage in desired or high-probability behaviors contingent upon specified prosocial or low-probability behaviors (Premack, 1959) has proven to be an effective reinforcement procedure with students exhibiting aggressive behavior in school. Activity reinforcers are also often used as backup reinforcers in token economies or as reinforcers for fulfillment of the terms of a behavioral contract.

Token reinforcement. Kazdin (1982) has asserted that token economies are effective with a wide range of student populations and age groups in various educational and treatment settings. Tokens are symbolic items (e.g., points, chips, checkmarks) provided to the student contingent upon prosocial behaviors. Tokens are exchangeable for a variety of backup tangible or activity reinforcers.

Modeling. This behavior-enhancement procedure involves having students observe peer or adult models performing and being reinforced for demonstrating prosocial behaviors and strategies. When students then imitate these modeled behaviors, they are reinforced as well. Modeling has the potential for reinforcement at two stages: (a) at the point of observing the model being reinforced (vicarious reinforcement) and (b) at the point where the student is directly reinforced for performing the same behaviors (Bandura, 1971). Goldstein, Harootunian, and Conoley (1994) indicate that modeling has a powerful effect on teaching prosocial alternatives to aggressive behavior.

Behavioral contracting. As the name implies, a behavioral contract is a formal written agreement negotiated between a student and teacher which specifies

- Student behaviors to be increased or decreased.
- Student's goals with respect to these behaviors.
- Consequences associated with goal attainment or nonattainment. (Rutherford, 1975)

As many practitioners can attest, behavioral contracting is effective in modifying a variety of desired and undesired behaviors in students of all ages. As Rutherford and Polsgrove (1981) concluded from their review of behavioral contracting studies with behaviorally disordered, antisocial, and delinquent students, "contracting has contributed to behavioral change in a number of instances with this population" (p. 64).

Social reinforcement. Teacher use of social reinforcement consists of positive verbal and physical attention, approval, and feedback contingent upon a desired student behavior. Social reinforcement often is an effective intervention, when used in combination with other behavior enhancement or reduction procedures, for developing prosocial behaviors in aggressive students (Mathur, Quinn, & Rutherford, in press). Furthermore, Walker, Colvin, and Ramsey (1995) argue that behavior-specific teacher praise is an ex-

tremely powerful form of focused attention that communicates approval and positive regard. They point out that while aggressive students may not initially respond to adult praise due to a history of negative adult interactions, through pairing with other behavior-enhancement procedures, the positive valence of praise eventually will increase. Accordingly, practitioners should not be discouraged by the early effects of their praise of student performance in the classroom.

Behavior-Reduction Contingencies

Research and experience demonstrate that students' aggressive behavior patterns often are not only well-developed and aversive, but also quite resistant to behavior-enhancement procedures used in isolation. Accordingly, intervention techniques that combine behavior-enhancement and -reduction techniques are often more effective in dealing with acting-out and aggressive behaviors (Walker et al., 1995). Behavior-reduction procedures proven to be effective with student aggression include differential reinforcement, response cost, and timeout.

Differential reinforcement. There are four strategies for reducing undesired behavior through differential reinforcement. Differential reinforcement of low rates of behavior (DRL) involves providing students reinforcers when aggressive behavior occurs no more than a specified amount in a period of time. Differential reinforcement of the omission of behavior (DRO) requires that aggressive behavior be suppressed for an entire interval of time. Differential reinforcement of incompatible behavior (DRI) and differential reinforcement of alternate behavior (DRA) involve reinforcing behaviors that are incompatible with, or merely alternative to, aggressive behaviors.

Generally speaking, DRL is used when a teacher can initially tolerate a limited number of aggressive responses as part of a shaping process which eventually leads to eliminating all such behavior. The accumulated literature tells us that DRO has been used successfully to reduce severe aggressive behavior problems by reinforcing the student for increased periods of time without aggression. DRI and DRA have been effective in situations where behaviors are incompatible or serve as an alternative to aggression (e.g., prosocial skills and strategies for social interaction are systematically reinforced).

Response cost. It is widely recognized that teacher removal of reinforcers contingent upon student emission of an undesired behavior is a powerful, cost-effective procedure for preventing and suppressing aggressive behavior (Walker, 1983). The two most common forms of response cost involve either the removal of the opportunity to participate in specified activities or token removal (e.g., fines within token economy systems following inappropriate behavior; Rutherford, 1983). Walker et al. (1995) note that response cost contingencies usually are necessary, in combination with other behavior-enhancement and -reduction procedures, to produce a significant reduction in aggressive behavior. Indeed, the literature supports the combined use of well-specified behavioral limits, behavior-enhancement contingencies, and aversive consequences, such as response cost and timeout, for reducing aggression in the schools.

Timeout. Response-contingent timeout, or timeout from positive reinforcement, is a behavior-reduction procedure whereby access to the sources of reinforcement is removed for a particular period of time contingent upon maladaptive behaviors (Rutherford & Nelson, 1982). Timeout is a complex intervention which may be implemented at a number of different levels, ranging from planned ignoring to seclusion (Nelson & Rutherford, 1983). While timeout has been shown to be effective in reducing student classroom aggression (Rutherford, 1983), many factors appear to influence its success, including the level of timeout used, the way in which it is applied, the schedule under which it is administered, procedures for removing the student from timeout, and its use in combination with other behavior-enhancement and -reduction interventions (Gast & Nelson, 1977). Like the other strategies described here, the use of timeout requires considerable teacher planning prior to classroom implementation and careful evaluation thereafter.

In seeking ways to fight classroom aggression, it is important that teachers recognize that some behavior-reduction contingencies generally have *not* proven to be effective with acting-out and aggressive behavior. These are (a) extinction, (b) verbal aversives, (c) physical aversives, and (d) overcorrection.

- *Extinction.* Withholding reinforcers (e.g., attention) thought to be maintaining undesired behavior contingent on the latter's occurrence has been used successfully in reducing a variety of student behaviors (Polsgrove & Reith, 1983). However, Stainback, Stainback, and Dedrick (1979) concluded that extinction is one of the least effective procedures for controlling severe maladaptive behavior and is an inappropriate choice for behaviors reinforced by consequences other than those controlled by the teacher (e.g., severe aggressive and disruptive behaviors).
- *Verbal aversives.* Verbal reprimands have been effective in reducing mild and moderate behavior problems (Rutherford, 1983) but, by themselves, are not likely to reduce more serious forms of aggressive behavior. However, if verbal aversives are paired with other punishing consequences, such as response cost or

timeout, they may acquire aversive properties and subsequently be effective when used alone (Gelfand & Hartman, 1984).

- *Physical aversives*. Physical aversives, in the form of corporal punishment, fail to yield sustained suppression of aggressive behaviors; increase the likelihood that the student will behave aggressively in other settings; and make no contribution to the development of new, appropriate behaviors (Goldstein, Apter, & Harootunian, 1984). The use of physical aversives with students with serious aggressive behavior problems often has its roots in physical abuse and violence. Therefore, in some cases, aggression may be learned through modeling the physically punitive behaviors of adults. To use physical aggression to control aggression is inconsistent with the goal of treatment and, as noted by Rose (1983), not empirically validated as effective.
- *Overcorrection*. Both restitutional and positive-practice overcorrection have been effective in reducing self-stimulatory and self-injurious behaviors, as well as the behavior problems of students with mild disabilities. Overcorrection is a complex behavior-reduction procedure involving components of restraint and guided practice, social punishment, extinction, and timeout. Although the effects of restitutional overcorrection on aggressive behavior have been found to be positive (Gelfand & Hartman, 1984), claims that overcorrection is superior to other alternative techniques have not been substantiated. Student resistance to overcorrection procedures poses a major obstacle to its effectiveness. Finally, many teachers simply find it an unacceptable practice.

Teaching Alternative Behaviors

Most educators agree that it is not enough simply to reduce the level of acting-out and aggressive behavior in the schools. The behavior management contingencies just described may combat aggressive student outbursts but, alone, do not offer the student new and better ways to solve problems with others. Behavior-enhancement and -reduction procedures can be used to teach replacement or alternative responses to aggression through social skills training and teaching anger-management.

Social skills training. The primary goal of social skills training is to help aggressive students avoid interpersonal rejection and gain acceptance by significant peers and adults. Aggressive students often are at a serious disadvantage because of their deficits in the areas of social perception and social skills. Walker et al. (1995) defined social skills as a set of competencies that allows students to initiate and maintain positive social relationships with others, contribute to positive peer acceptance and positive school adjustment, and cope effectively with the larger social environment. Social competence is a judgment-based evaluation by peers, teachers, parents, and others that the student exhibits persistent and generalized social skills and strategies across multiple settings and with multiple individuals.

The *Teaching Social Skills: A Practical Instructional Approach* curriculum (Rutherford, Chipman, DiGangi, & Anderson, 1992) is an example of a program that focuses on teaching prosocial skills to elementary-aged aggressive, immature, or withdrawn students. The format of the program is constructed to incorporate effective components of behavioral intervention in order that students are taught to eventually self-manage prosocial alternatives to aggression and develop effective and positive social interactions.

Anger management training. Students with aggressive behavior patterns often experience social rejection, academic failure, and lowered self-esteem. While the teacher-mediated contingency-management interventions just identified may effectively control aggressive behavior in the school, aggressive students may continue to be persistently angry in interactions with others outside school. Several impediments to implementing contingency-management interventions with chronically aggressive students include (a) competing peer reinforcement contingencies, (b) lack of powerful competing reinforcers, (c) low-frequency or covert aggressive behaviors that go undetected or unconsequated, (d) inconsistent behavior change agents, and (e) lack of maintenance and generalization of treatment effects (Feindler & Ecton, 1986).

Recognition is growing that the direct treatment of the high anger arousal which may accompany impulsive and explosive behavior is a vital addition to teacher-mediated contingency management of aggressive behavior. While aggressive behavior need not always be accompanied by anger arousal, most theorists agree that a state of anger often is an antecedent to aggressive behavior. Thus, school personnel should understand that a primary focus of treatment of aggression should be on anger control.

Aggression Replacement Training (Goldstein & Glick, 1987) provides an example of an anger-control program that combines contingency management procedures and prosocial skills development with cognitive-behavioral, anger-reduction strategies. Aggression-replacement training teaches students to reduce, manage, and control their anger and aggression by teaching them to respond to provocations which previously occasioned anger with a chain of responses consisting of (a) triggers—identifying internal and external events that stimulate anger; (b) cues—identifying physiological factors that signal

anger arousal; (c) reminders—using techniques such as backward counting, deep breathing, peaceful imagery, and reflection on long-term consequences; (d) using prosocial skill alternatives to anger and aggression; and (e) conducting self-evaluation of the use and results of the anger-control sequence (Goldstein & Glick, 1987).

What It Will Take to Make Schools Safe Again

As Van Acker (1995) points out, student aggression is an extremely complex issue in America's schools. While the typical response to aggression involves interventions that are usually too short, too weak, and reactive rather than proactive, I believe that there is an abundant technology for successfully dealing with most aggressive behavior in the classroom and school.

Notwithstanding the attention given to violent assaults in the schools, the majority of hostile acts consist of verbal threats, bullying, shoving and hitting, and comparable acts of aggression (e.g., Gable, Bullock, & Harader, in press). It was the consensus of this chapter's forum group that teacher-mediated interventions have much to offer schools seeking to create classroom-based and school-wide programs for preventing or reducing student aggression. The usefulness of these interventions is boosted through systematic approaches to teach prosocial and anger-control skills as replacement behaviors for aggressive and violent behaviors.

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Creating Community: A Promising Concept for Preventing and Eliminating Aggressive and Violent Behaviors

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This chapter is the culmination of a series of discussions and the written comments and recommendations of approximately 20 professionals from three North and South American countries; individuals on the team also represented a broad geographical cross-section of the United States. These individuals met in conjunction with the February 1995 CCBD Forum on Working with Children and Youth Who have Aggressive and Violent Behaviors. This working group, whose opinions are presented here, was comprised of direct and indirect service providers with ties to international, federal, state, and local health, education, justice, law enforcement, and social service agencies.

To an individual, each member of the discussion group was committed to the ongoing development of their own knowledge and skills and voiced a strong concern that the knowledge and skills of their colleagues be relevantly updated. Retooling the skills of professionals was viewed as an important first step to the task of redressing the conditions that foster aggression and violence in today's young citizens. However, the group universally expressed the opinion that the active involvement and continued enlightenment of the entire community (e.g., students, families, business people, legislators, religious leaders) would be a necessary condition before the trend of increasingly aggressive behaviors in younger and younger children and the trend toward more serious forms of aggression by children and youth could be effectively reversed. In fact, "articulation of school as inseparable from community" captures a major sentiment of this group in terms of a prescription for the future.

The Growing Challenge of Aggression and Violence in the Schools

The professional literature and daily press are replete with research and expert opinion as well as crime statistics and haunting personal portrayals that document the alarming incidence of societal violence which overflows into the daily lives of children (Gable, Hendrickson, & Sasso, in press). A climate of fear, intimidation, and hopelessness is known to pervade the work lives of many educators and the daily lives of the youngsters they serve (Sautter, 1995). One of the outcomes of living and working in such inhumane conditions is the tendency to resort to self-protection at any cost, often in the form of aggression and violence toward others.

Dryfoos (1994) estimates that at least 10 million children in the United States can be considered high risk. These are children who *enter* school with serious emotional, social, health, and linguistic disabilities. By and large, these children are received in school by well-intended, dedicated educators. Unfortunately, the knowledge, skills, personal experience, background, values, and beliefs of these same educators, combined with adverse work conditions, all too often mitigate against the successful adjustment and prosocial development of today's school children. The complex social, emotional, health, and family needs of these youngsters further hamper their academic achievement and cognitive development. The gulf between these students and their expectations and capabilities and the expectations of teachers widens day by day. Misunderstanding, poor communication, and antagonism between educators and children and their families grow as students advance through the grade levels.

This chapter's working group identified a number of specific conditions which to us appeared to be endemic to the circumstances that foster aggressive behaviors and exacerbate the challenge of replacing destructive behaviors of school-age children and youth with socially acceptable, constructive behavioral repertoires. For organizational purposes, these specific factors have been subsumed under four variable labels: (a) classroom/teacher factors, (b) building and building-level factors, (c)administrative and policy factors, and (d) community factors. Those that emerged in this group's discussion as particularly salient in relation to the problem of escalating aggression and violence in schools are enumerated next. The list is relatively extensive; however, each item is offed as a stimulus or catalyst for individual readers and planning teams in the design of intervention strategies that have relevance to local schools and communities. Thus, the section following this listing of factors refocuses on broader issues related to intervention.

Classroom/Teacher Factors

- Ineffective instruction and inappropriate curricula that result in an intensification of a student's problems, an increasing sense of alienation and isolation, and the expression of multiple forms of school avoidance and escape behavior.
- Inadequate behavior management and communication skills; classrooms that too often reflect the teacher's need for control versus the individual student's need to participate, choose, and learn in a nonthreatening classroom context.
- Not intervening early and swiftly in the chain of the behaviors leading to more aggressive acts.
- The need for caringly and expertly administered strategies for assisting students in resolving conflict, developing problem-solving skills, and implementing personal goal-setting and self-management approaches in daily living.
- Equating "discipline" with punishment as well as applying rules related to "disciplining" inconsistently and/or unjustly.
- A personalized, defensive response to student disruptive/aggressive behaviors; not taking advantage of the superior opportunity for teaching, learning, and building relationships that each occurrence of inappropriate, disruptive, or aggressive behavior offers.
- Teachers as negative role models (e.g., teachers behaving aggressively; not following their own rules; showing disrespect for children, parents, and colleagues); observation of such teacher behaviors reinforces the virtues of aggression and erodes student trust in adults

by verifying that even teachers do not "do as they say."

- Children, especially preteens and adolescents, unwelcomed and undervalued by teachers and peers.
- Parents and families are routinely and conveniently labeled as uncooperative and dysfunctional.
- A lack of early-morning, after-school, and community-linked programs.
- A lack of daily joy and the daily experience of accomplishment and personal satisfaction on the part of children and teachers.
- No time to relax and "de-stress."

Building and Building-Level Factors

- Unreasonably large class sizes and overcrowded facilities.
- Dilapidated, poorly maintained facilities and equipment.
- A shortage of up-to-date equipment and curricular materials.
- Subtle and direct encouragement of students to dropout; subtle and direct messages that undermine student feelings of self-worth.
- Administrators who isolate themselves from teachers and students.
- Lack of administrative support for teacher collaboration—lack of adequate planning time and coteaching opportunities.
- No routinely administered strategies for involving students in school issues and policy making; insufficient recognition of the positive contributions of the majority of children and teachers.
- Insufficient supervision of students during transition and less-structured times.
- Teachers, families, and students are not empowered by the system; reinforcement of passivity and involvement.

Administrative and Policy Issues

- Creativity and flexibility neither encouraged nor rewarded.
- Lack of a written policy and clearly articulated procedures for dealing with common problems (e.g., verbal intimidation) or crises (e.g., a murder on campus).
- Lack of proactive approaches, such as ones aimed at preventing gang infiltration, drug and substance abuse, or other common issues.
- Reluctance to endorse the teaching of basic values such as honesty and respect for self and others.
- Insufficient outreach to children, families, and the community; few serious, long-term efforts to engage all stakeholders in planning and decision making.
- Inadequate teacher and community involvement in, and support of, the curriculum.
- Incomplete and ineffective life- and social-skills instruction.
- Inadequate school-to-work programs.
- Growing popularity of simplistic, short-term, and politically palatable solutions.

Community Factors

- Fragmented, difficult-to-access services and insufficient resources.
- Suspicion among agencies, turf protection, and the lack of incentives for developing partnerships.
- "Children" undervalued, perceived as disposable commodities, and used as political pawns; not recognized as a nation's greatest resource.
- Need for greater awareness by citizens, community leaders, and politicians of the complex etiology and functions of aggression and the need for proactive approaches, a prevention focus, and long-term intervention programs.
- Societal violence and its portrayal in the media.
- A climate of blame and mistrust among stakeholders (versus cooperation and shared assumption of responsibility).
- The need for educational systems to reflect the increasing diversity of communities.
- Interagency collaboration and partnerships hampered by criteria for program eligibility, funding constraints, procedural and record-keeping differences, inadequate assessment and planning, and an underemphasis on accountability.
- A need for greater agency accountability, long-term planning, and short- and long-term outcome data.
- Predominance of negative media coverage of school performance and reluctance on the part of educators to assertively publicize their accomplishments.

This group believed that teams of local stakeholders representing the constituency of schools and the community at large have the talent to devise multiple options and community-supported strategies for addressing the factors just listed. Stakeholder teams could be authorized to establish priorities, oversee the implementation of program plans, and facilitate

the development of a permanent infrastructure to ensure that resources and incentives are maintained. Clearly, the tasks of stakeholder teams would not be simple, fast, or easy. On the other hand, these forum participants were convinced that mutually designed and implemented endeavors would be superior to current practice.

Strategies to Combat Aggression and Violence in Schools

A business-as-usual approach to the treatment and education of children and families bodes ill for schools and communities presently confronting, or soon to be faced with, the ever accelerating rate of aggression and violence. To positively impact the ecologies which promote and sustain aggression, three types of change will be required: (a) substantial adaptations in teaching and learning practices, (b) relatively dramatic changes in the school as a workplace, and (c) significant modifications in the governance and incentive structures under which schools operate (Elmore, 1990). The articulation of these changes will necessarily vary from state to state and school to school. It is likely that the ultimate success of restructuring schools along these three dimensions will be affected by several other important considerations:

- An emphasis on quality programming, a focus on individual and group strengths, and recognition of individual and group limitations.
- The provision for a continuum of integrated, coordinated services that meet the specific and unique needs of children and their families.
- Consideration of full-service schools and school-based health, social service, and adult education programs as well as school-linked services.
- Effective and up-to-date teacher preparation and professional development programs.
- Recognition of the interactive nature of all behavior.
- The development of mutual goals, the establishment of joint partnerships, and the celebration of shared achievements.
- The attitude that every child counts and that every person can positively contribute.
- Recognition that trust is based on relationships, and building positive relationships with children and families must become a priority.

What It Will Take to Make Schools Safe Again

"Picture a community ... where all children are learning academic subjects well in a safe and discipline environment, where hard work and honesty are valued, As adults, they'll be able to get good jobs, be good citizens, and live good lives"(pp. 1-3). GOALS 2000, federal legislation aimed at providing every child a world-class education, begins with this vision. For any community to combat aggressive behavior and save its children from the trauma and negative outcomes of violence, a shared philosophy and vision for the future will be required. With clearly defined goals, well-planned action steps, and careful monitoring of community progress, individual and collective hope will rise.

The jointly established philosophy that informs the action plans school and community members design should be consistent with the values and goals of the community. Steady, concerted effort by each person, regardless of the nature of an individual's contribution, will hasten the demise of aggressive behavior as the behavior of choice. This work group was particularly concerned that the promise of quick fixes and politically appealing answers to the issue of violence and school-age children be scrutinized and resisted lest time and energy be diverted from worthwhile practice. Finally, this group reached the consensus that many empirically documented approaches for reducing aggression in homes and schools exist and that educators' goals should be to design ways to consistently and universally implement such strategies.

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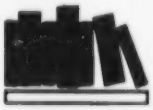

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